



Home Office

Planning Proposal Statement

MOD015

**Former Defence Storage and Distribution Centre Site,
(MOD Bicester A – Site),
Bicester Garrison, Launton Road, Oxfordshire, OX25 1AE**

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date of Change	Paragraph No.	Purpose/Change
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The reviewer signoff shall signify the recommendations for acceptance of this document.

Reviewed By	Role/Grade	Date

Contents of this document will be kept under periodic review collaboratively by Home Office representatives.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overview

- 1.1 The Home Office has statutory powers to provide support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute. This includes the provision of accommodation and/or subsistence under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, temporary support under section 98 while an application under section 95 is under consideration, and support under section 4(2) for certain refused asylum seekers who meet the relevant statutory criteria.
- 1.2 This Planning Proposal Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Home Department (SSHD) (the “Applicant”) in support of an application for Urgent Crown Development (“UCD”) pursuant to sections 293B to 293C of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Crown Development) (Urgent Applications) (Procedure) (England) Order 2025.
- 1.3 This Planning Proposal Statement supports the temporary use of the former Defence Storage and Distribution Centre site (MOD Bicester A – Site) (referred to in this statement as “Bicester” or the “Site”) for non-detained asylum accommodation, together with associated operational development, infrastructure, welfare and support facilities, access arrangements, servicing, landscaping and all other works required to facilitate that temporary use for a proposed period of 10 years.
- 1.4 This statement should be read alongside the application forms, plans and the full suite of technical documents submitted in support of the application.

The Development Proposal

- 1.5 The Secretary of State is seeking planning permission using the Urgent Crown Development Route. The summary description of development is as follows:

“The temporary change of use of the former defence storage & distribution centre site (MOD Bicester A - site) in connection with the phased provision of non-detained asylum accommodation.

The Proposed Development comprises the retention and change of use of Building A6, demolition of existing buildings and structures and vegetation clearance, the erection

of new modular accommodation, and the provision of space for associated health and welfare facilities, site infrastructure, wastewater treatment plant, roads, access ways, security infrastructure, parking, staff accommodation and facilities, and open space and recreational areas, to accommodate up to 1,256 service users”.¹

Project Background

- 1.6 The purpose of this statement is to describe the Site and its context, explain the proposed development, identify the relevant legislative and planning policy framework, and assess the principal planning considerations arising from the proposal. The planning case set out in this statement is directed to the specific characteristics of the Site, the temporary nature of the proposed use for a period of 10 years, and the need for the development in the public interest as detailed in the Statement of National Importance and Emergency which accompanies this application.
- 1.7 A full description of development is set out above and also in section three of this statement.

Application Content

- 1.8 The Bicester planning application comprises the following plans and documentation:

Application Forms

- Urgent Crown Development Planning Application Form

Plans for Approval

- Site Location Plan (Drawing no. BIC-DR-AR-100105-P01)
- Site Parameters Plan (Drawing no. BIC-DR-AR-100107-P01 Rev. 2)
- Site Demolition Plan (Drawing no. BIC-DR-AR-100108-P01)

Plans for Information

- Existing Site Plan (Drawing no. BIC-DR-AR-100106-P01)

Documents for Approval

- Statement of National Importance and Emergency
- Planning Proposal Statement (this document)

¹ Service user (or SU) = asylum-seeker

Documents for Information

- This covering letter
- Article 4 Notice Letter (copy)
- Article 5 Compliance Statement
- Statutory Fee Calculation
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Utilities and Infrastructure Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Fire Safety Strategy
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Drainage Design Statement
- Archaeological and Heritage Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Assessment
- Preliminary Geo-environmental and Geo-technical Assessment
- UXO Assessment
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Habitats Regulation Assessment
- EIA Screening Opinion Request (as submitted to the Planning Casework Unit)
- Natural England advice

Two further documents are being finalised and will be submitted under separate cover:

- Noise Technical Note
- Air Quality Technical Note

1.9 The Bicester planning application has adopted a 'Rochdale Envelope approach' and assesses maximum parameters to ensure the reasonable worst-case development scenario has been assessed. This approach has been adopted to provide flexibility in the design and implementation stages, whilst ensuring that the environmental impacts of the application are thoroughly assessed. Approval of detailed design is envisaged through relevant approvals at the discharge of conditions stage pursuant to the proposed planning consent granted via the Urgent Crown Development route.

Why is the Bicester site needed for the purposes of providing asylum accommodation?

- 1.10 The Home Office proposes to use the Site to accommodate single adult males who have arrived in the United Kingdom and are awaiting the determination of their asylum claims. It is vital that the Home Office has the infrastructural capability to accommodate anyone who requires support under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and there is an urgent and continuing need for suitable accommodation that can be operated in a safe, secure and well-managed manner. The proposed development would provide that accommodation together with the supporting infrastructure and facilities necessary to ensure the Site functions effectively as a self-contained temporary accommodation centre.

Local Engagement

- 1.11 A dedicated team leads engagement for the site. Key stakeholders include local authority leadership, the South-East Strategic Migration Partnership, and statutory partners (Police, Health, Fire & Rescue, Ambulance), convened through an Operational Working Group initially and transitioning to Multi-Agency Forums (MAFs) as we move toward a potential opening of the site. Engagement, including through MAFs, will continue through mobilisation, into operation (once all due diligence, approvals and necessary permissions are in place and a final decision is made to open the site) and throughout decommissioning. The local MP has also been advised of the proposals and will continue to be engaged. It is intended that the site be as self-sufficient as possible to minimise impacts on local communities. A public-facing factsheet will be published on GOV.UK and kept up to date through the lifetime of the site.

The Proposed Planning Route

- 1.12 The Home Office is submitting a planning proposal via the Urgent Crown Development route which became available from May 2025.

- 1.13 As part of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) a new route to securing planning permission for Nationally Important Crown Development was introduced into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This allows an ‘appropriate authority’ (the applicant), to apply directly to the Secretary of State for planning permission where the proposed development is of national importance.
- 1.14 A special procedure where development is of national importance and needed as a matter of urgency, ‘Urgent Crown Development’, was updated through the LURA. This allows the appropriate authority to apply directly to the Secretary of State where development is both of national importance and needed as a matter of urgency, and applications will be subject to a simplified procedure.
- 1.15 A separate statement setting out the reason why the proposal at Bicester is both Nationally Important and Urgent has also been submitted.

Report Structure

- 1.16 This report is structured as follows:
- Section 2 - Site Context
 - Section 3 - Proposed Development
 - Section 4 - Outline Operational Management Plan
 - Section 5 - Relevant Legislation and Planning Policies
 - Section 6 - Planning Considerations
 - Section 7 - Technical Considerations
 - Section 8 - Environmental Assessment
 - Section 9 - Conclusions

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The Site extends to approximately 10.22 hectares and lies around 4.75 km south of Bicester within the administrative area of Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire. The approximate central grid reference is SP 630 178 and the Site is accessed from the B4011. The Site forms part of the former Defence Storage and Distribution Centre at MOD Bicester and comprises previously developed land containing substantial areas of hardstanding, warehouse buildings and former military structures, together with peripheral vegetation and open land.

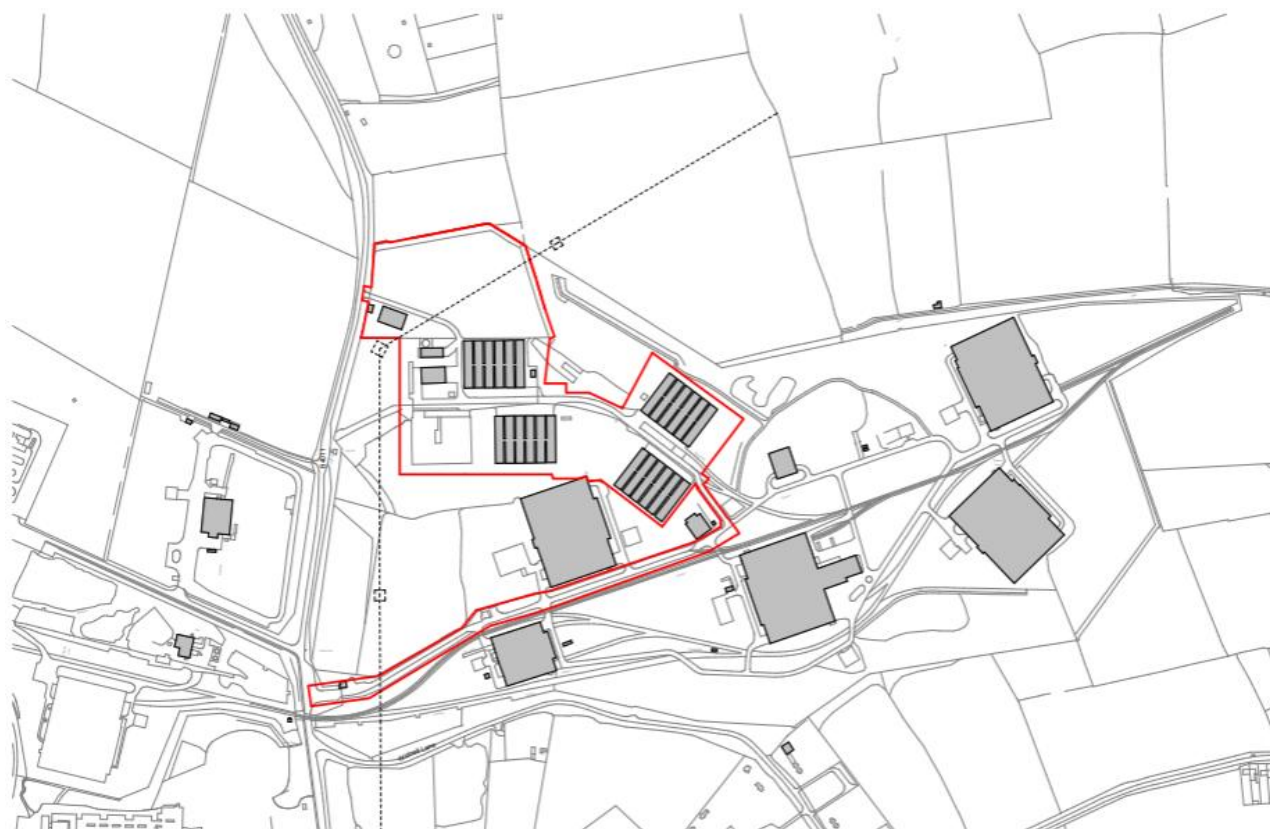
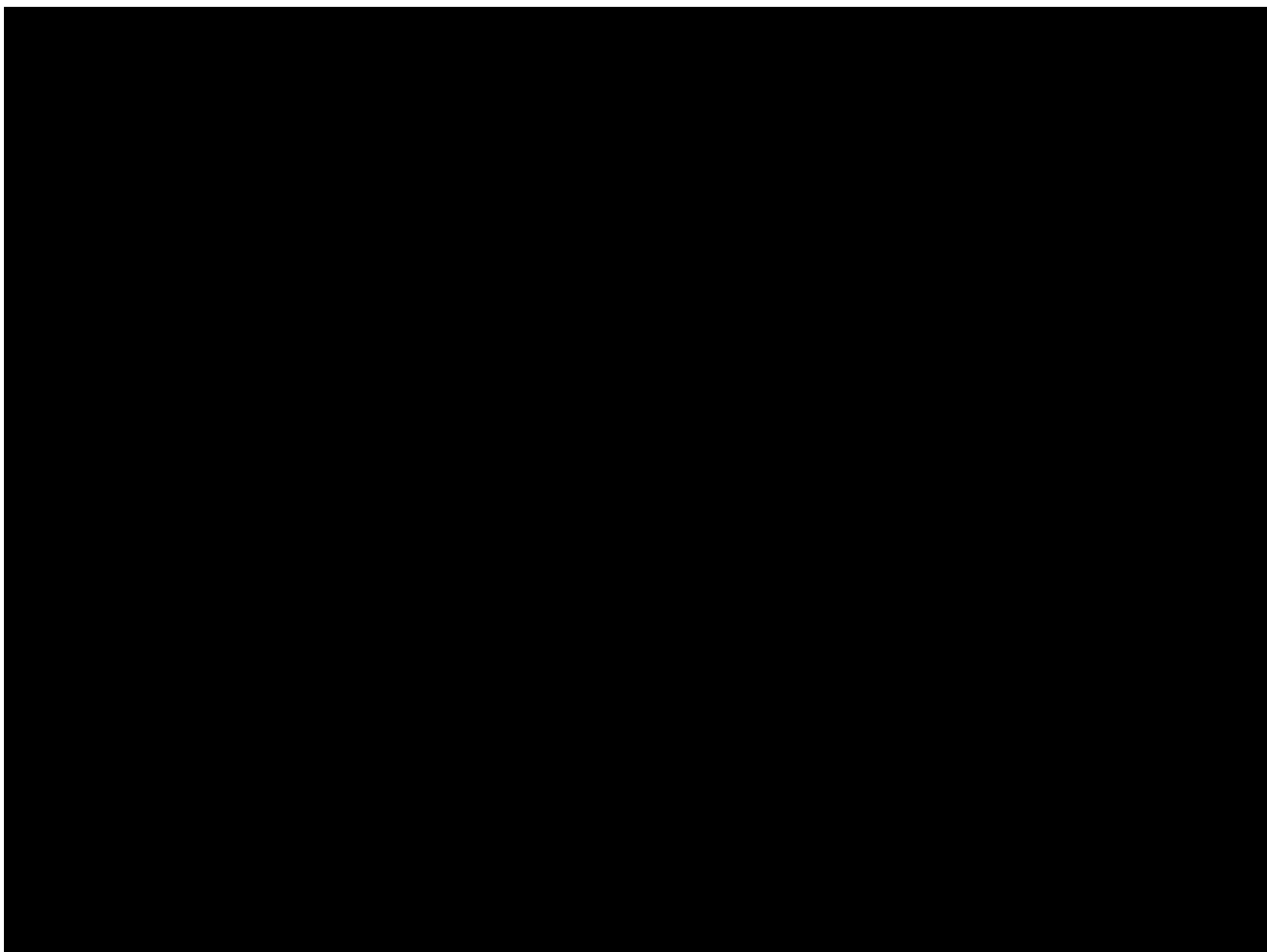


Figure 1(a): Location Plan

- 2.2 The Site historically functioned as one of the Ministry of Defence's principal logistics hubs. [REDACTED]

- 2.3 The Site comprises a combination of grassland, scrub, woodland, trees, shrubs and extensive hardstanding. Vehicular access is available from two points on the B4011, including the principal northern access and a secondary southern access.
- 2.4 The Site is bounded to the west by the B4011, which provides connections north towards Bicester and south towards Thame. The Site is enclosed in part by fencing and existing vegetation, with roadside and boundary planting providing a degree of visual containment. The nearest residential receptor is an isolated property 'Wild Meadow' located circa 296 metres north of the site. HM Prison Bullingdon is circa 307 metres south-west of the Site. The settlement of Piddington is circa 706 metres to the east. Upper Arncott (Category A Village – as mentioned in the Local Plan) is circa 1.6 km to the west of the site. In wider terms, the Site occupies a rural but previously developed setting, characterised by former military land uses and associated operational infrastructure.



Existing Site and Surrounding Infrastructure

Pedestrian Accessibility

- 2.5 The Site has two existing access points from the eastern side of the B4011 - the main Site access to the north, and an emergency access to the south. There is currently no pedestrian infrastructure provided along this section of the B4011, making both accesses inaccessible by foot.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Network

- 2.6 The Site is not directly connected to any Public Rights of Way network, although several nearby routes provide pedestrian links to Piddington, Blackthorn and Lower Arncott. Access to these routes is limited due to the absence of pedestrian infrastructure along the B4011.

Cycling Network

- 2.7 There is no existing cycle infrastructure within the vicinity of the site along the B4011, which is a single-carriageway road subject to a 60mph speed limit.

Public Transport Accessibility

- 2.8 The nearest bus stops to the Site are located on Palmer Avenue and Thame Road with bus stops also located on Norris Road and Ploughley Road. All of these bus stops are accessible by cycling from the Site; walking, however, would not be possible due to the B0411 having no pedestrian path. The bus servicing the Palmer Avenue and Thame Road bus stops is the 108 Bicester – Langford Village Circular. The nearest train station is in Bicester and is located c.5.6 km northwest of the Site, with services running every 30 minutes and connecting to cities including London and Birmingham. The closest bus stops are located on Palmer Avenue c.1.4 km west of the Site and Thame Road c.736 m southeast of the Site.

Rail Accessibility

- 2.9 The nearest railway station is Bicester Village railway station, located approximately 4 miles north of the Site. Operated by Chiltern Railways, the station provides direct services to Oxford and London Marylebone station, with a typical peak frequency of two trains per hour. The station offers a range of passenger facilities, including ticketing, waiting areas, cycle parking and step-free access, supporting multi-modal journeys.

Local Amenities

- 2.10 There are very limited facilities in the immediate vicinity of the Site, reflecting its rural location and lack of direct pedestrian connectivity to nearby settlements. However, this is not considered to be a material constraint because the proposed development is intended to operate as a self-contained site, with the principal facilities and day-to-day services required by staff and service users provided within the Site.

Local Highway Network

- 2.11 The Site is served by the local highway network, with direct access via the B4011 - a rural single-carriageway road that is subject to a 60mph speed limit. The surrounding network comprises a series of minor rural roads connecting nearby settlements, with limited capacity and no significant urban street infrastructure in the immediate vicinity. Overall, the local highway environment is predominantly rural in character.

Strategic Highway Network

- 2.12 The Site benefits from access to the wider strategic highway network via the A41 road and A34 road, which are the principal routes in the area. These corridors provide onward connections to the M40 motorway, facilitating north–south and regional travel towards Oxford, Bicester, and beyond. While not immediately adjacent to the Site, these strategic routes are accessible within a reasonable driving distance, offering integration with the national motorway network.

Site and Surrounding Area Policy and Environmental Designations

- 2.13 The Site does not contain scheduled monuments nor does it contain statutory listed buildings or structures. There are twelve statutory listed buildings located approximately 750 meters to the east of the Site within the village of Piddington (see **Figure 2** and **Table 1**).

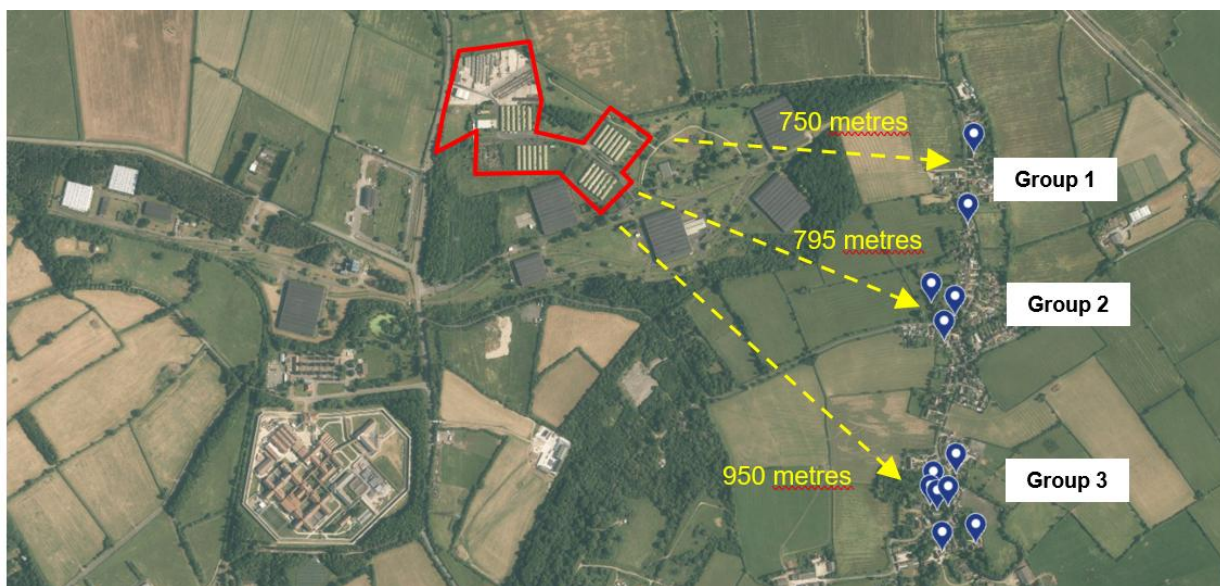


Figure 2: Proximity from site to Statutorily Listed Buildings/Structures (source: Historic England)

Table 1: Details of Statutorily Listed Buildings/Structures in the Village of Piddington (Source: Historic England)

Grade II Listed Fir Tree House (List Entry Number: 1233003)	Group 1: Statutorily Listed Buildings
Grade II Listed 33 Lower End (List Entry Number: 1276801)	
Grade II Listed Brown's Place (List Entry Number: 1233009)	Group 2: Statutorily Listed Buildings
Grade II Listed Barn 100 m north of Brown's Place (List Entry Number: 1233002)	
Grade II Listed Gwith Cottage (List Entry Number: 1233011)	
Grade II Listed Brook Cottage (List Entry Number: 1233010)	
Grade II Listed Inn Cottage (List Entry Number: 1233012)	

Grade II Listed Church Cottage (List Entry Number: 1233013)	Group 3: Statutorily Listed Buildings
Grade II* Listed Church of St Nicholas (List Entry Number: 1233014)	
Grade II Listed Graveboard (List Entry Number: 1233016)	
Grade II Listed Manor House (List Entry Number: 1276812)	
Grade II Listed The Old Vicarage (List Entry Number: 1233017)	

The Site lies within the Arncott Bridge Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI] Impact Zone (see **Figure 3**).

Nearest SSSI's to the Site

- Arncott Bridge SSSI: 1,850 metres (north west) Site within SSSI Risk Impact Zone
- Muswell Hill SSSI: 2,500 metres (south east)
- Long Hendon Meadow SSSI: 2,616 metres (south east)
- Rusbeds Wood and Railway Cutting SSSI: 2,880 metres (south east)
- Whitecross Green and Oriel Wood SSSI: 3.9 kilometres

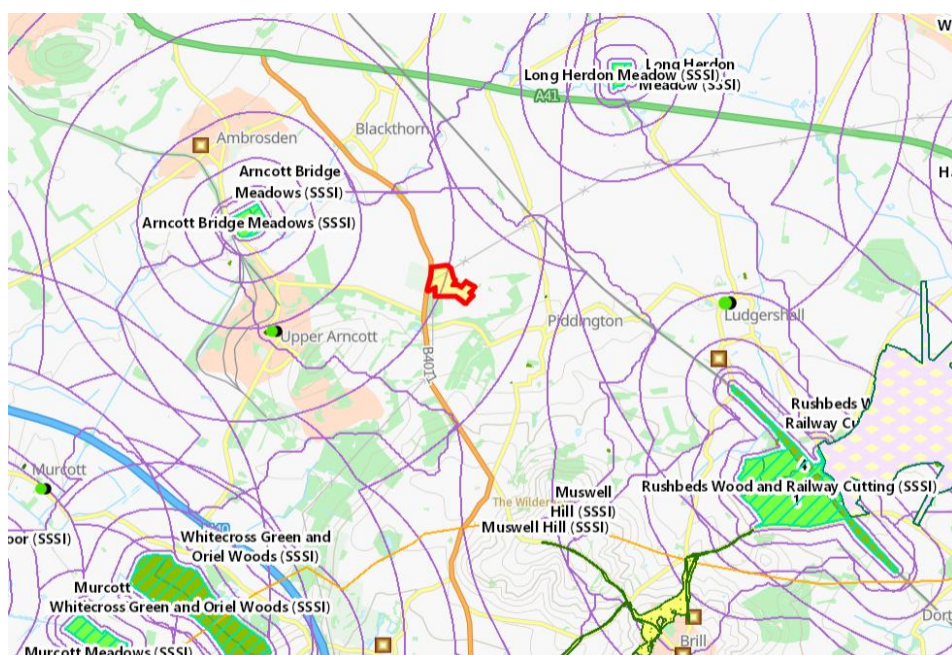
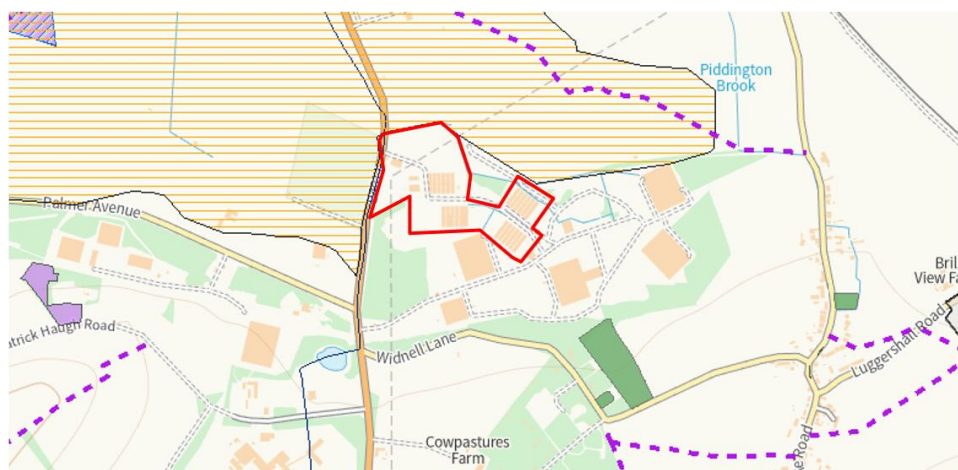


Figure 3: Proximity from site to SSSI's (Sites of Scientific Special Interest) (Source Defra Magic Maps)

The Site does not contain adopted Local Plan policy map designations, however the Site is immediately adjacent to a 'Conservation Target Area' (see **Figure 4**).



Legend (Relevant Adopted Planning Policy Map Designations)

- Application Site (proposed built areas)
- Existing Green Space
- Habitats (Previously UKBAP)
- Conservation Target Areas

Figure 4: Site as shown in the context of the Adopted Local Plan Policies Map

Figure 5 below shows the areas within the Site that are subject to surface water accumulation. Phase 1 has a 'low' chance of surface water flooding (i.e. between 0.1% and 1% chance each year), whereas Phases 2 and 3 has a 'medium' (i.e. between 1% and 3.3% chance each year) to 'high' (i.e. more than 3.3%) chance of flooding each year. Approximately 25% of the Site has a 'high chance' of surface water flooding.



Figure 5: Environment Agency Surface Water Flooding (Extent) Map (accessed: 27.04.2026)

Approximately 0.16 hectares (1.6%) of the Site is within Flood Zone 3 (River) (see **Figure 6**).



Key

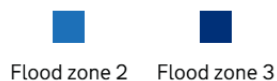
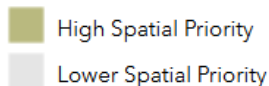


Figure 6: Environment Agency River Flooding Map (accessed 28.04.2026)

100 metres to the southeast of the site lies an England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) Biodiversity 'Priority Habitat Network' (see **Figure 7**).



Key: EWCO Biodiversity – Priority Habitat Network

Figure 7: EWCO England Woodland Creation Offer (source: Forestry Commission accessed 28.04.2026)

Figure 8 below identifies an area approximately 50 metres south of the site which has been designated for woodland creation (ecological network enhancement) under the Countryside Stewardship initiative.



Figure 8: CS Biodiversity Priority Habitat Proximity 'Broadleaved Woodland'

Planning History

- 2.14 On 18 August 2003, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now called the Secretary of State) granted planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of a Home Office 'Immigration Accommodation Centre' utilising the existing access from the highway (LPA Ref: 02/01045/GD, PINS Ref: APP/C3105/V/02/1097456). **Figure 9** shows the application site boundary for 02/01045/GD. The application site measured 10.2 hectares.
- 2.15 The following development was approved for the site:
- Accommodation for 750 asylum seekers (including families and individuals),
 - Buildings for community, catering, shops, administrative, civic, welfare, creche and 'Hearing' purposes (where asylum claims would be heard),
 - Sports building and football pitch,
 - Parking area for 150 cars, bus lay-bys
 - Storage buildings and landscaped areas

- Habitat area for Great Crested Newts
- Pedestrian and access improvements to Palmer Avenue.



Figure 9: Site Location Boundary for Planning Reference: 02/01045/GD (source: CgMs ADBA, May 2002)

- 2.16 The following provides summarised bullet points from the ODPM's [approved outline planning application] decision letter dated 18 August 2003:

Paragraph 6: The SoS issued a Screening Opinion on 13 August 2002 confirming that the proposal was not EIA development.

Paragraph 9: The SoS considered the proposed development to be a composite sui-generis use.

Paragraph 13: The SoS did not consider that the proposed use/development would give rise to an excessive or inappropriate traffic generation (subject to improved site pedestrian access and mini-bus service for staff to reduce the need to travel by private motor vehicle).

Paragraph 27: The provision of a free mini-bus service [for employees] mitigates against the relatively isolated rural location of the site and the number of trips that would normally be generated by a development of the scale and type proposed.

Paragraph 48: The SoS concluded that the development would provide all services needed by service users on-site and therefore would reduce the need to travel outside the development with the exception possibly being the desire by some service users wanting to "explore their surroundings on foot".

Paragraph 36: Both the SoS and Planning Inspector acknowledged the roads surrounding the site are deficient in the provision of footways.

Paragraph 17: The SoS concluded the proposed development would not cause harm to the topography and character of the landscape.

Paragraph 19: The SoS concluded that it was not necessary for the proposal to demonstrate convincing [town planning] reasons why it was necessary to be in a non-urban location. The 'principle' for the development had been established in Government policy at the time and evidence showing an urgent need for this kind of accommodation in both urban and non-urban locations.

Paragraph 21: Both the SoS and Planning Inspector (non-statutory public local Inquiry held between 10 December 2002 to 3 March 2003) agreed that the likely benefits of the proposal in terms of contributing to the development of a more efficient process for dealing with claims for asylum, should be weighed positively in the overall planning balance and final decision.

Paragraph 22 and 23: Both the SoS and Planning Inspector agreed that it was not necessary to carry out a sequential test or consider alternative options for the location of the proposed development.

Paragraph 24: Both the SoS and Planning Inspector agreed that the site was/is previously developed land.

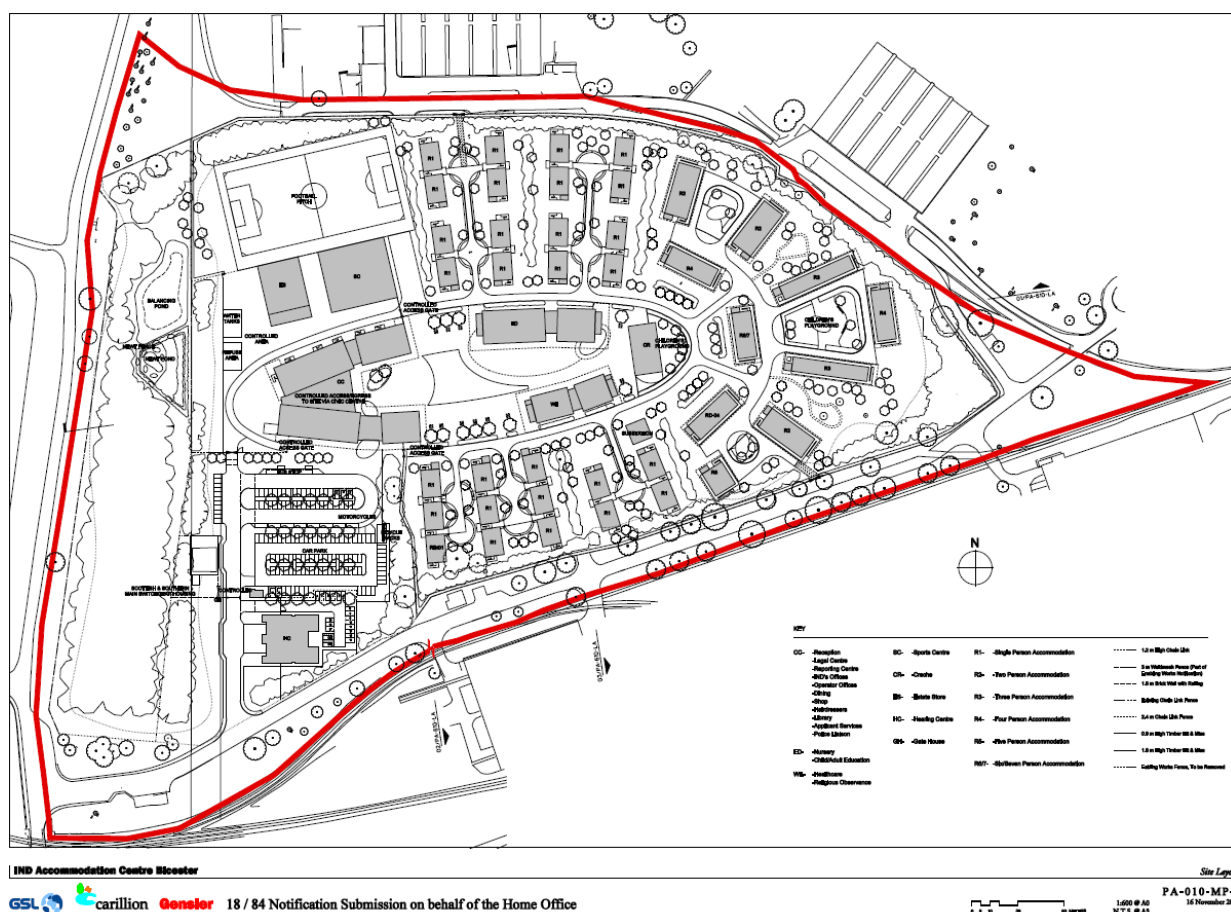
- 2.17 On 21 December 2004 planning permission for enabling works associated with the 02/01045/GD outline application/consent for the demolition of the existing gatehouse and search building, erection of a new gatehouse, extension of the perimeter fence, and construction of two lay-bys was granted by the Secretary of State (**03/01824/GD**), see **Figure 10** below. In summary, the Secretary of State did not consider that the enabling works (including extension of the perimeter fence around the accommodation centre and removal of twelve trees) would have an unacceptable impact upon the character or appearance of the site or surrounding area.



Figure 10: Site Location Boundary for Planning Reference: 03/02334/GD

- 2.18 **Figure 11** below provides the proposed site plan which accompanied the consultation package (Reserved Matters Application following the approved outline planning consent 02/01045/GD) to Cherwell District Council. The consultation package (LPA Ref: 04/02503/GD) provided the details for the siting, design, layout and external appearance of all buildings and landscaping for the site (including lighting scheme).
- 2.19 In response to the consultation package of development details the LPA [South Area Planning Committee] had raised the following objections to the reserved matters details of the approved scheme:
- (1) The design of the accommodation blocks in particular the siting, standard of design and style had been considered inappropriate in the landscape setting and would be to the detriment to the character and appearance of the area.
 - (2) The proposed lighting would result in significant intrusion into the nighttime environment and would be to the detriment of the character of the area surrounding the site.
 - (3) The proposed lighting would likely be distracting to drivers on the adjacent B4011 and would be to the detriment of road safety.

- 2.20 The detailed response from the LPA [South Area Planning Committee] on the consultation package is available to read in full in report available on the Council's planning register dated 17 March 2005.
- 2.21 A final determination of the Reserved Matters Application (LPA Ref: 04/02503/GD) by the Secretary of State was never reached.
- 2.22 Planning applications to discharge reserved matters to the 02/01045/GD outline planning consent were subsequently 'withdrawn' and the project was ultimately abandoned by the Home Office.



KEY

CC-	-Reception -Legal Centre -Reporting Centre -IND's Offices -Operator Offices -Dining -Shop -Hairdressers -Library -Applicant Services -Police Liaison	SC-	-Sports Centre	R1-	-Single Person Accommodation	-----	1.2 m High Chain Link
		CR-	-Creche	R2-	-Two Person Accommodation	- - - - -	3 m Weldmesh Fence (Part of Enabling Works Notification)
		ES-	-Estate Store	R3-	-Three Person Accommodation	-----	1.5 m Brick Wall with Railing
		HC-	-Hearing Centre	R4-	-Four Person Accommodation	— · · · —	Existing Chain Link Fence
		GH-	-Gate House	R5-	-Five Person Accommodation	-----	2.4 m Chain Link Fence
ED-	-Nursery -Child/Adult Education					-----	0.9 m High Timber Hit & Miss
						-----	1.8 m High Timber Hit & Miss
WE-	-Healthcare -Religious Observance			R6/7-	-Six/Seven Person Accommodation		Enabling Works Fence, To be Removed

Figure 11: Consultation version site layout for outline consent [02/01045/GD] RMA 04/02503/GD

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Description of Development

- 3.1 The Secretary of State seeks planning permission via the Urgent Crown Development route for the temporary change of use of the Site and associated operational development required to provide a self-contained non-detained asylum accommodation centre for a period of 10 years.

The temporary change of use of the former defence storage & distribution centre site (MOD Bicester A - site) in connection with the phased provision of non-detained asylum accommodation.

The Proposed Development comprises the retention and change of use of Building A6, demolition of existing buildings and structures and vegetation clearance, the erection of new modular accommodation, and the provision of space for associated health and welfare facilities, site infrastructure, wastewater treatment plant, roads, access ways, security infrastructure, parking, staff accommodation and facilities, and open space and recreational areas, to accommodate up to 1,256 service users”.

Existing and Proposed Floorspace

- 3.2 **Table 2** sets out the summary of existing and proposed floorspace:

Table 2(a): Summary of Existing Floorspace	
Existing Buildings to be demolished	Floorspace sqm GIA
Buildings 30, 31, 32, 33, 81	15,950
Existing Buildings to be retained	Floorspace sqm GIA
Building A6	1,400

- 3.3 **Figure 2(a)** above provides an existing site building plan which identifies the buildings which are to be demolished and to be retained.
- 3.4 In line with the RICS Code of Measuring Practice, the Gross Internal Areas (GIA) referenced in this Planning Statement and on planning application form includes all enclosed internal spaces which includes plant and tank rooms.

Table 2(b): Summary of Proposed Floorspace	
Total Gross Proposed Floorspace	Floorspace sqm GIA
New Build Modular Blocks	14,471
Wastewater Treatment Plant	3,105
Pumping Station	359
Total	17,935

Design Considerations

Design Rationale and Concept

- 3.5 The proposed masterplan has evolved through an iterative feasibility and design process which has tested site constraints, operational requirements and technical considerations. The design approach seeks to deliver a robust and efficient layout capable of supporting the phased delivery of temporary accommodation and associated facilities, whilst responding sensitively to the Site's physical characteristics and wider context.

General Design Principles

- 3.6 The proposed masterplan has been designed to be sympathetic to the landscape. As part of the modular design, single-storey units will be located where sympathetic interactions with the highways and public realm are beneficial and where natural features can be utilised, such as existing hedgerows, stone walls and trees to obscure new building massing.
- 3.7 Where two-storey configurations are proposed, a combination of varied orientations, façade colouration changes and varied groupings will be employed to reduce the perception of monolithic development on the site.
- 3.8 The proposed building facades will be designed to benefit from natural lighting and will include shading features that break up large areas of otherwise blank modular walls.
- 3.9 Modular buildings are to be orientated in varied sets to fit into the forms/patterns of the surrounding landscape.

Separation of the Units

- 3.10 The criteria governing the separation distances between modules are to be based on the following criteria: -

- (a) Amenity rights to natural light governed by planning policy and best design practice. Single storey arrangement - there is a 1-metre separation to allow light to penetrate via the side windows. Double storey arrangement - there is a 2-metre separation to allow the lower modules to receive sufficient natural light into the side windows.
- (b) Fire separation between glazed unprotected facades at the end of each 12-metre SU accommodation unit is to be provided.

External Connecting Spaces and Routes

- 3.11 There are three types of external spaces that will modulate the impacts of the new development on the surrounding context. Site access roads are to allow construction and operational vehicles to access all parts of the Site.
- 3.12 Pedestrian routes will either be covered with canopies or open depending on whether the path is a primary connecting route between the accommodation and the shared support buildings. Uncovered paths and routes will be secondary connections between buildings and shared external spaces. This hierarchy of connectivity will also inform the hierarchy of shared external spaces.

Sustainability and Environmental Design

- 3.13 Sustainability both in construction and in use needs careful consideration in the material resource used and energy used in all project stages including relocation of modular buildings. The logistical challenge in the procurement of such large numbers of identical designed units, in rapid response to emergency conditions, will require a diverse range of standard supply routes.
- 3.14 With the application of the general design principles and adopting a flexible construction method, the imposition on each site and the environment can be reduced creating a 'lightness of touch' on the earth and by extension a reduced impact of perceived permanence from external parties.

Accessibility and Inclusive Design

- 3.15 Accessibility considerations are to be implemented across the sites to incorporate inclusive design principles. The proposal for each site is ongoing and is to be finalised at the detailed design stage.
- 3.16 Key considerations include: localising primary building functions to single storey, maintaining accessibility from ground floor, accessible ablutions are available across all sites, and accessible parking provision is to be made available with a minimum 5% designated accessible car parking spaces for staff. No car parking is proposed for service users.

4.0 OUTLINE OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Overview

- 4.1 The purpose of this section is to provide a high-level outline of governance and operations contributing to the safe, secure and effective operation of the Site. A full Operational Management Plan, detailing governance, processes and procedures will be prepared for the Site, following the appointment of the Service Provider(s), and will be kept on site throughout its operation.

Context and Background

- 4.2 The Site will provide full-board accommodation for single adult males aged 18 to 65, allocated in accordance with the [Allocation of Accommodation](#) policy (or updated published guidance).
- 4.3 Appropriate risk assessments have been undertaken and will be maintained for the Site. An Equalities Impact Assessment (which will be under regular review) has been undertaken and will be submitted to accompany this planning proposal.
- 4.4 The management of the accommodation and support services provided at the Site will be through a contracted Service Provider. The Provider shall comply with any duties imposed on them by section 55 of the Border, Citizenship, and Immigration Act 2009.
- 4.5 The Home Office's priority is to provide a safe, secure and properly managed environment for service users whilst operating the Site in a considerate manner that takes account of neighbouring communities. In that regard, the Home Office will seek to maintain appropriate engagement with relevant local partners, voluntary organisations and faith groups.

4.6 The Home Office will utilise existing on-site infrastructure and provide additional facilities as necessary to ensure that the Site operates safely and effectively as temporary asylum accommodation. In broad terms, the Site is intended to provide:

- Regular bedspaces provided via modular accommodation units.
- Shared ablutions at a ratio of 1 to 5.
- A suitable number of bedspaces will be reserved as isolation bedspaces (for the containment of infectious and communicable diseases) with dedicated ablutions.
- Arrival of inflow cohorts via adequate road capacity, entry and exit points.
- On-arrival induction.
- Kitchen and dining facilities to support the provision of three meals per service user per day.
- Laundry to allow the Service Provider the washing of service users' personal items, bedding and towels.
- Communal spaces.
- Recreational facilities.
- Private meeting rooms for official business (e.g. meeting with legal representatives, asylum interview, welfare check, etc).
- Rooms to support the provision of enrichment/support services (usually delivered by local NGOs).
- Multi-faith room.
- Office space to accommodate delivery partner staff (e.g. Service Provider, Migrant Help, Home Office Oversight & Assurance).
- Space for the provision of healthcare (primary care and infectious disease management).

Staffing and Site Management

Site Staffing Model

4.7 The Home Office will engage a Service Provider (or providers) for the Site who will be under a contract with the Home Office to operate the Site on its behalf and provide accommodation services, service user welfare services, security, cleaning, catering and administration at the Site. Additionally, a contractor will provide maintenance and facilities management services of the buildings and infrastructure.

- 4.8 The Site will have operational oversight by a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) appointed by the Home Office.
- 4.9 The Site will operate on a 24-hour basis, 365 days per year, with an on-site management [REDACTED]

Site Operation Arrangements

- 4.10 The Home Office New/Large Sites Oversight and Assurance Team will have a regular presence on-site to monitor operational delivery, with the SRO being the overarching link between the delivery partners on-site.

Governance Structure

- 4.11 The Home Office New/Large Oversight and Assurance team is led by a Deputy Director from the Senior Civil Service (SCS). The Senior Responsible Officer and/or members of the Home Office Oversight and Assurance Team will hold regular meetings with the Service Provider management team on site and conduct a monthly performance review.

Accommodation and Facilities

Induction

- 4.12 Drawing on experience of operations at other similar sites, it is anticipated that upon arrival, service users will be escorted to the Induction room to be welcomed and briefed on the Site rules and expectations, facilities and day-to-day arrangements. Interpreters are utilised where necessary. Service Provider staff are present on site 24/7. If service users have any queries following their induction, they can raise these with Welfare at any time. Welfare Staff have access to interpreters.
- 4.13 Migrant Help are available remotely for service users to contact and they may also provide an on-site team. The service provides advice, guidance and support on the asylum process.

Accommodation

- 4.14 The sleeping accommodation will be laid out over several blocks, and each block will have access to shared ablutions comprising toilets, basins and showers. All service users will have a single bed, bedding and lockable storage unit.
- 4.15 The nature of the accommodation is covered for service users as part of the induction and reinforced through an Occupancy Agreement, which will also include detail of the requirement to ensure accommodation is kept at the required standard.

Catering

- 4.16 The Service Provider will deliver a full-board catering service comprising three meals per day for each service user, together with appropriate refreshments. The catering offer will be designed to meet relevant nutritional standards and to accommodate dietary, cultural and religious requirements. This service will be delivered from communal kitchen and dining facilities within the Site.

Clothing

- 4.17 Clothing will not be supplied to asylum claimants whilst at the accommodation. Service users will be made aware of various voluntary sector support in the vicinity of the accommodation.

Laundry

- 4.18 On-site laundry facilities will be operated and managed by the Service Provider to allow the laundering of service users' personal items, bedding and towels.

Cleaning

- 4.19 Cleaning services will be provided to accommodation and communal areas in accordance with the Site's operational requirements and hygiene standards.

Waste Management

- 4.20 The Site will not carry out recycling on site. Waste will be separated into general waste and recyclable waste.

On- and Off-Site Activities

- 4.21 On-site activities will be arranged, managed and signposted by the Service Provider.

4.22 Wi-fi will be available on-site and made available to Service Users.

4.23 Education and recreation opportunities in the local community or provided by NGOs will be signposted during induction and on an ongoing basis by the Service Provider. The following recreational facilities will be provided:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

4.24 A multi-faith facility will be provided at the Site for religious worship. This will be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Service users will also be free to attend places of worship off-site.

Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE)

4.25 Migrant Help (MH) are contracted by the Home Office to deliver the Advice, Issue Reporting, Eligibility (AIRE) contract.

4.26 Service users will have access to the standard AIRE services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. These services provide advice, guidance and support in relation to the asylum process, including signposting to pastoral support and legal services, and enable service users to raise issues and complaints regarding the accommodation and support they receive.

4.27 Private space will be available on site, managed by the Service Provider, to allow service users to hold private meetings with their legal representatives.

Asylum Claim – Case progress

4.28 Private rooms will be available at the Site to conduct remote asylum interviews by caseworkers from the Home Office. No individual asylum casework surgeries will be offered. Individual queries on status are directed through Migrant Help with signposting offered on the provision of legal aid.

Noise Monitoring

- 4.29 The Service Provider will be responsible for monitoring noise levels across the Site. If noise levels give rise to disturbance, in particular after 2200hrs, appropriate management intervention will be taken.

Correspondence, Phone Calls

- 4.30 Mail will be received, sorted and handled by the Service Provider and made available, to named service users. Email correspondence from the Home Office will be printed by the Service Provider and distributed to service users within 24 hours of receipt or as requested by the sender of the email. The email is printed in the language it is received in. The provider will ensure service user access to a mobile phone where requested/required.

Service Users' Property

- 4.31 Service users at the site are allowed a limited amount of property in their personal possessions. These possessions are transported with them to the accommodation site. Any complaints regarding lost or stolen property will be managed via the complaints procedure and are reported to Migrant Help and the police, where applicable.

Complaints/Requests

- 4.32 Service users will be informed of the complaints procedure during their induction, and it will also be outlined in their Occupancy Agreement. Service Users wishing to make enquiries about asylum support, their asylum application or make requests for specific services will be able to do so via Migrant Help.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

- 4.33 The Home Office Asylum Accommodation and Support Services contract with Service Providers incorporates the overarching principles contained within the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, such that both parties will preserve the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of personal data, and take steps to prevent the corruption or loss of such data. The data will only be processed to the extent, and in such manner, as is necessary for the effective functioning of the operations at each site, or as is required by law or any regulatory body.

Access to Site

Admissions

4.34 [Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Access for New Arrivals

4.35 [Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Service Users Leaving and Returning to the Site

4.36 [Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Official Site Visitors

4.37 [Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

4.38 [Redacted]
[Redacted]

[REDACTED]

Site Signage

- 4.39 All key signage on site will be clearly visible and available in the languages most frequently used by service users.

Access for Emergency Services

- 4.40 On-site security personnel will ensure that all emergency vehicles have free and easy access to the site.

Access for Deliveries/Taxis/Sub-Contractors/Visitors

- 4.41 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Traffic Management

- 4.43 There are vehicle parking facilities which will be monitored, and a Travel Management Plan will be deployed and managed by the Service Provider.

Health and Wellbeing

Suitability Assessment

- 4.44 The Home Office undertakes a suitability assessment before a person is transferred to the accommodation site in line with the Allocation of Asylum Accommodation policy.

[REDACTED]

Infectious and Notifiable Communicable Diseases

- 4.45 Drawing on experience from similar asylum accommodation sites already operating elsewhere in the UK, appropriate space will be provided on site for the delivery of healthcare to meet routine and primary care needs. Procedures are in place to support individuals with potential symptoms of infectious disease. Local UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Health Protection Teams can provide advice and guidance on the management of individuals and contacts with a suspected infectious disease or outbreaks.

Suicide and Self Harm Prevention

- 4.46 [REDACTED]

Health and Safety

- 4.47 [REDACTED]

Handling a Death at the Site

- 4.48 [REDACTED]
- 4.49 [REDACTED]

4.50

[REDACTED]

Security

4.51

[REDACTED]

4.52

4.53

Protestor Management

- 4.54 The Home Office will inform the local police if it becomes aware of any potential protest. Should protest activity occur at the site, it will be managed by the local police as an operational policing matter.

Fire Risk Management Plan

- 4.55 The site will operate with a Fire Risk Management Plan that will identify how the organisation will prevent and manage fire risks deriving from the Fire Risk Assessment and ensure compliance with regulatory responsibilities.

5.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION & PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 This section sets out the legislative and planning policy context relevant to the Bicester scheme. There is no statutory requirement for the decision maker to consider compliance with the development plan. Each decision will be made after consideration of the planning merits of the case, this includes taking into account relevant planning matters raised by the relevant local planning authority (the local planning authority to which an application would otherwise have been made), and consultees during the representations period (and by any independent advisor if one is appointed).
- 5.2 The proposal under consideration, if successful, would grant planning permission for the Site to operate as asylum accommodation.

Legislation

- 5.3 As part of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) a new route to securing planning permission for Nationally Important Crown Development was introduced into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Sections 293B and 293C provide for a special procedure where an ‘appropriate authority’ can apply for permission from the Secretary of State for development of national importance and needed as a matter of urgency – Urgent Crown Development.
- 5.4 Section 293B sets out the relevant procedures for applicants making an application under this route, and Section 293C provides details on how such decisions are to be made by the Secretary of State.
- 5.5 Immigration Rules Part 11:Asylum (paragraphs 326A to 352H) provide that an ‘application for asylum (or an ‘asylum application’) is a claim by a person to be recognised as a refugee under the Refugee Convention on the basis that it would be contrary to the United Kingdom’s obligations under the Refugee Convention for them to be removed from or required to leave the United Kingdom, and which is recorded as a valid or a claim deemed to be an application for asylum in accordance with paragraph 327EC.
- 5.6 An ‘asylum applicant’ is someone who makes a claim under paragraph 327(i) or who is deemed to have made such a claim in accordance with paragraph 327EC.

- 5.7 The Secretary of State for the Home Department (SSHD) has statutory powers to provide support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute. This includes the provision of accommodation and/or subsistence under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, temporary support under section 98 while an application under section 95 is under consideration, and support under section 4(2) for certain refused asylum seekers who meet the relevant statutory criteria.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 5.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in December 2024 and amended in February 2025, sets out the Government's planning policies and is underpinned by the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF provides the overarching planning guidance to which all Development Plan Documents must conform, and it is therefore a material consideration of considerable weight.
- 5.9 The following key paragraphs are relevant to the consideration of this proposal:
- 5.10 **Chapter 8:** 'Health and safe communities'. Planning decisions should achieve healthy, inclusive and safe Developments so that crime and disorder and the fear of crime does not undermine the quality of life for occupants of the site and Development.
- 5.11 **Chapter 9:** 'Promoting sustainable transport'. Development proposals should promote sustainable transport and include solutions that deliver well-designed and sustainable places.
- 5.12 **Chapter 11:** 'Making effective use of land'. Planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land / previously developed land.
- 5.13 **Chapter 12:** 'Achieving well-designed places'. Planning decisions should ensure Developments will function well and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- 5.14 **Chapter 14:** 'Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding'. New Development should be planned in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the

impacts of climate change including flood risk (river and surface water flooding) and overheating and should help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- 5.15 **Chapter 15: 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment'. Paragraph 193(a) 'Biodiversity'**: If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a Development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- 5.16 **Paragraph 193(b) 'SSSI'**: Development on land outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 5.17 **Paragraph 196 'Contamination'**. Decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination and that adequate site investigation information has been prepared by a competent person.
- 5.18 **Paragraph 198 'Air Quality, Noise and Light Pollution'**. Decisions should ensure that new Development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the Development. Developments should mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impact resulting from noise from new development and limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.
- 5.19 **Chapter 16: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'. Paragraph 207 Heritage Assets**: In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the

assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

- 5.20 Where a site on which development is proposed has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Local Planning Policy

- 5.21 The proposed development site boundary is within the administrative area of Cherwell in Oxfordshire. The development plan for the area is established by the Cherwell Local Plan (Saved Policies) 1996 and the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1 Adopted 20th July 2015).
- 5.22 The following key policies and paragraphs are relevant to the consideration of this proposal:

Cherwell Local Plan (1996) Saved Policies

- 5.23 **Policy TR7:** 'Traffic on Minor Roads'. Development that would regularly attract large commercial vehicles or large numbers of cars onto unsuitable minor roads will not normally be permitted. In order to protect the amenities of the plan area, and in the interests of highway safety, development likely to create significant traffic flows will normally, subject to consideration of the other policies in this Plan, be expected to have good access to the major through routes or County inter-town routes identified in the Structure Plan or other principal roads.
- 5.24 **Policy TR10:** 'Heavy Goods Vehicles on Minor Roads'. Development that would generate frequent heavy-goods-vehicle movements through residential areas or on unsuitable urban or rural roads will not be permitted. The council will resist proposals for the establishment of heavy goods-vehicle operating centres where they would create traffic problems or adversely affect the amenity of residential areas or villages.

- 5.25 **Policy C1:** 'Nature Conservation'. The council will seek to promote the interests of nature Conservation. Development which would result in damage to or loss of sites of special scientific interest or other areas of designated wildlife or scientific importance will not normally be permitted. Furthermore, the council will seek to ensure the protection of sites of local nature conservation value. The potential adverse effect of development on such sites will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- 5.26 **Policy C2:** 'Nature Conservation'. Development which would adversely affect any species protected by schedule 1, schedule 5 and schedule 8 of the 1981 Wildlife and countryside act, and by the E.C. Habitats directive 1992 will not normally be permitted. In addition to habitats of importance to nature conservation there are a number of plant and animal species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the E.C. Habitats Directive 1992. Policy C2 seeks to protect them from development which would result in their loss or damage.
- 5.27 **Policy C4:** 'Nature Conservation'. The council will seek to promote the creation of new habitats. In urban areas the council will promote the interests of nature conservation within the context of new development and will establish or assist with the establishment of ecological and nature conservation areas, where such areas would further the opportunity for environmental education and passive recreation and would not conflict with other policies in the plan.
- 5.28 **Policy C7:** 'Landscape Conservation'. Development will not normally be permitted if it causes demonstrable harm to the topography and character of the landscape.
- 5.29 **Policy C8:** 'Landscape Conservation'. Sporadic development in the open countryside including developments in the vicinity of motorway or major road junctions will generally be resisted. Sporadic development in the countryside must be resisted if its attractive, open, rural character is to be maintained.
- 5.30 **Policy C8** will apply to all new development proposals beyond the built-up limits of settlements including areas in the vicinity of motorway or major road developments but will be reasonably applied to accommodate the needs of agriculture. There is increasing pressure for development in the open countryside particularly in the vicinity

of motorway junctions. The Council will resist such pressures and will where practicable direct development to suitable sites at Banbury or Bicester.

- 5.31 **Policy C15:** 'Landscape Conservation'. The council will prevent the coalescence of settlements by resisting development in areas of open land, which are important in distinguishing them.
- 5.32 **Policy C18:** 'Historic Buildings'. In determining an application for listed building consent the council will have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. The council will normally only approve internal and external alterations or extensions to a listed building which are minor and sympathetic to the architectural and historic character of the building.
- 5.33 **Policy C28:** 'Design'. Control will be exercised over all new development, including conversions and extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external-finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development. In sensitive areas such as conservation areas, the area of outstanding natural beauty and areas of high landscape value, development will be required to be of a high standard and the use of traditional local building materials will normally be required.
- 5.34 **Policy C32:** 'Design'. In considering proposals for development the council will support measures that provide, improve or extend access facilities for disabled people.
- 5.35 **Policy ENV1:** 'Pollution Control'. Development which is likely to cause materially detrimental levels of noise, vibration, smell, smoke, fumes or other type of environmental pollution will not normally be permitted.
- 5.36 The Council will seek to ensure that the amenities of the environment, and particularly the amenities of residential properties, are not unduly affected by development proposals which may cause environmental pollution, including that caused by traffic generation. In addition to the above policy, policies AG3 and AG4 of chapter 8 relate specifically to intensive livestock and poultry units and associated problems of smell and waste disposal.

- 5.37 Where a source of pollution is already established and cannot be abated, the Council will seek to limit its effect by ensuring that development within the affected area maintains a suitable distance from the pollution source.
- 5.38 **Policy ENV10:** 'Pollution Control'. Development proposals which are likely to damage or be at risk from hazardous installations will be resisted.
- 5.39 **Policy ENV12:** 'Contaminated Land'. Development on land which is known or suspected to be contaminated will only be permitted if:
- (i) adequate measures can be taken to remove any threat of contamination to future occupiers of the site,
 - (ii) the development is not likely to result in contamination of surface or underground water resources
 - (iii) the proposed use does not conflict with the other policies in the plan.
- 5.40 Proposals for the redevelopment of sites known or suspected to be contaminated will be considered against the above policy. Development on land known or suspected to be contaminated must accord with the regulations set out in Circular 21/87.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1 Adopted 20th July 2015)

- 5.41 **Policy SLE4:** 'Improved Transport and Connections'. New development in the district will be required to provide financial and/or in-kind contributions to mitigate the transport impacts of development.
- 5.42 All development where reasonable to do so, should facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. Encouragement will be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. Development which is not suitable for the roads that serve the development and which have a severe traffic impact will not be supported.

- 5.43 **Policy BSC2:** 'The Effective and Efficient Use of Land-Brownfield Land'. Development in Cherwell will be expected to make effective and efficient use of land. The Council will encourage the re-use of previously developed land in sustainable locations.
- 5.44 **Policy BSC 8:** 'Securing Health and Well-Being'. The Council will support the provision of health facilities in sustainable locations which contribute towards health and well-being including the replacement of the Bicester Community Hospital.
- 5.45 **Policy ESD 1:** 'Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change'. Measures will be taken to mitigate the impact of development within the district on climate change. At a strategic level, this will include:
- Distributing growth to the most sustainable locations as defined in this Local Plan
 - Delivering development that seeks to reduce the need to travel and which encourages sustainable travel options including walking, cycling and public transport to reduce dependence on private cars.
 - Designing developments to reduce carbon emissions and use resources more efficiently, including water (see Policy ESD 3 Sustainable Construction).
 - Promoting the use of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy where appropriate (see Policies ESD 4 Decentralised Energy Systems and ESD 5 Renewable Energy).
- 5.46 **Policy ESD 1** continues: The incorporation of suitable adaptation measures in new development to ensure that development is more resilient to climate change impacts will include consideration of the following:
- Taking into account the known physical and environmental constraints when identifying locations for development
 - Demonstration of design approaches that are resilient to climate change impacts including the use of passive solar design for heating and cooling
 - Minimising the risk of flooding and making use of sustainable drainage methods, and
 - Reducing the effects of development on the microclimate (through the provision of green infrastructure including open space and water, planting, and green roofs).

5.47 **Policy ESD 2: 'Energy Hierarchy and Allowable Solutions'.** In seeking to achieve carbon emissions reductions, we will promote an 'energy hierarchy' as follows:

- Reducing energy use, in particular by the use of sustainable design and construction measures
- Supplying energy efficiently and giving priority to decentralised energy supply
- Making use of renewable energy
- Making use of allowable solutions.

5.48 **Policy ESD 3: 'Sustainable Construction'.** All new residential development will be expected to incorporate sustainable design and construction technology to achieve zero carbon development through a combination of fabric energy efficiency, carbon compliance and allowable solutions in line with Government policy.

5.49 Cherwell District is in an area of water stress and as such the Council will seek a higher level of water efficiency than required in the Building Regulations, with developments achieving a limit of 110 litres/person/day.

5.50 All new non-residential development will be expected to meet at least BREEAM 'Very Good' with immediate effect, subject to review over the plan period to ensure the target remains relevant. The demonstration of the achievement of this standard should be set out in the Energy Statement. The strategic site allocations identified in this Local Plan are expected to provide contributions to carbon emissions reductions and to wider sustainability.

5.51 All development proposals will be encouraged to reflect high-quality design and high environmental standards, demonstrating sustainable construction methods including but not limited to:

- Minimising both energy demands and energy loss
- Maximising passive solar lighting and natural ventilation Maximising resource efficiency

- Incorporating the use of recycled and energy efficient materials Incorporating the use of locally sourced building materials Reducing waste and pollution and making adequate provision for the recycling of waste
- Making use of sustainable drainage methods
- Reducing the impact on the external environment and maximising opportunities for cooling and shading (by the provision of open space and water, planting, and green roofs, for example); and
- Making use of the embodied energy within buildings wherever possible and re-using materials where proposals involve demolition or redevelopment.

5.52 Should the promoters of development consider that individual proposals would be unviable with the above requirements, 'open-book' financial analysis of proposed developments will be expected so that an independent economic viability assessment can be undertaken. Where it is agreed that an economic viability assessment is required, the cost shall be met by the promoter.

5.53 **Policy ESD 4: 'Decentralised Energy Systems'.** The use of decentralised energy systems, providing either heating (District Heating (DH)) or heating and power (Combined Heat and Power (CHP)) will be encouraged in all new developments.

- A feasibility assessment for DH/CHP, including consideration of biomass fuelled CHP, will be required for:
- All residential developments for 100 dwellings or more
- All residential developments in off-gas areas for 50 dwellings or more All applications for non-domestic developments above 1,000 sqm floorspace.

5.54 The feasibility assessment should be informed by the renewable energy map at Appendix 5 'Maps' and the national mapping of heat demand densities undertaken by the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) (see Appendix 3: Evidence Base).

5.55 Where feasibility assessments demonstrate that decentralised energy systems are deliverable and viable, such systems will be required as part of the development unless an alternative solution would deliver the same or increased benefit.

- 5.56 **Policy ESD 5: 'Renewable Energy'**. The Council supports renewable and low carbon energy provision wherever any adverse impacts can be addressed satisfactorily. The potential local environmental, economic and community benefits of renewable energy schemes will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- 5.57 Planning applications involving renewable energy development will be encouraged provided that there is no unacceptable adverse impact, including cumulative impact, on the following issues, which are considered to be of particular local significance in Cherwell:
- Landscape and biodiversity including designations, protected habitats and species, and Conservation Target Areas
 - Visual impacts on local landscapes
 - The historic environment including designated and non-designated assets and their settings
 - The Green Belt, particularly visual impacts on openness
 - Aviation activities
 - Highways and access issues, and
 - Residential amenity.
- 5.58 A feasibility assessment of the potential for significant on-site renewable energy provision (above any provision required to meet national building standards) will be required for:
- All residential developments for 100 dwellings or more
 - All residential developments in off-gas areas for 50 dwellings or more
 - All applications for non-domestic developments above 1,000 sqm floorspace.
- 5.59 Where feasibility assessments demonstrate that on site renewable energy provision is deliverable and viable, this will be required as part of the development unless an alternative solution would deliver the same or increased benefit. This may include consideration of 'allowable solutions' as Government Policy evolves.

- 5.60 **Policy ESD 6:** 'Sustainable Flood Risk Management'. The Council will manage and reduce flood risk in the district through using a sequential approach to development; locating vulnerable developments in areas at lower risk of flooding. Development proposals will be assessed according to the sequential approach and where necessary the exceptions test as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Development will only be permitted in areas of flood risk when there are no reasonably available sites in areas of lower flood risk and the benefits of the development outweigh the risks from flooding.
- 5.61 Site specific flood risk assessments will be required to accompany development proposals in the following situations:
- All development proposals located in flood zones 2 or 3 Development proposals of 1 hectare or more located in flood zone 1
 - Development sites located in an area known to have experienced flooding problems
 - Development sites located within 9m of any watercourses.
- 5.62 Flood risk assessments should assess all sources of flood risk and demonstrate that:
- There will be no increase in surface water discharge rates or volumes during storm events up to and including the 1-in-100-year storm event with an allowance for climate change (the design storm event)
 - Developments will not flood from surface water up to and including the design storm event or any surface water flooding beyond the 1 in 30-year storm event, up to and including the design storm event will be safely contained on site.
- 5.63 Development should be safe and remain operational (where necessary) and proposals should demonstrate that surface water will be managed effectively on site and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere, including sewer flooding.
- 5.64 **Policy ESD 7:** 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)'. All development will be required to use sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) for the management of surface water run-off. Where site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required in association with development proposals, they should be used to determine how SUDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems.

- 5.65 In considering SUDS solutions, the need to protect ground water quality must be taken into account, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Where possible, SUDS should seek to reduce flood risk, reduce pollution and provide landscape and wildlife benefits. SUDS will require the approval of Oxfordshire County Council as LLFA and SUDS Approval Body, and proposals must include an agreement on the future management, maintenance and replacement of the SUDS features.
- 5.66 **Policy ESD 8: 'Water Resources'**. The Council will seek to maintain water quality, ensure adequate water resources and promote sustainability in water use. Water quality will be maintained and enhanced by avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment.
- 5.67 Development proposals which would adversely affect the water quality of surface or underground water bodies, including rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, as a result of directly attributable factors, will not be permitted. Development will only be permitted where adequate water resources exist or can be provided without detriment to existing uses. Where appropriate, phasing of development will be used to enable the relevant water infrastructure to be put in place in advance of development commencing.
- 5.68 **Policy ESD 10: 'Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment'**. Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment will be achieved by the following:
- In considering proposals for development, a net gain in biodiversity will be sought by protecting, managing, enhancing and extending existing resources, and by creating new resources
 - The protection of trees will be encouraged, with an aim to increase the number of trees in the district
 - The reuse of soils will be sought If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, then development will not be permitted
 - Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of international value will be subject to the Habitats Regulations Assessment process and will not be

permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no likely significant effects on the international site or that effects can be mitigated

- Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of national importance will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site and the wider national network of SSSIs, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity
- Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance including habitats of species of principal importance for biodiversity will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity
- Development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to encourage biodiversity and retain and where possible enhance existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Existing ecological networks should be identified and maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation, and ecological corridors should form an essential component of green infrastructure provision in association with new development to ensure habitat connectivity
- Relevant habitat and species surveys and associated reports will be required to accompany planning applications which may affect a site, habitat or species of known or potential ecological value
- Air quality assessments will also be required for development proposals that would be likely to have a significantly adverse impact on biodiversity by generating an increase in air pollution
- Planning conditions/obligations will be used to secure net gains in biodiversity by helping to deliver Biodiversity Action Plan targets and/or meeting the aims of Conservation Target Areas. Developments for which these are the principal aims will be viewed favourably
- A monitoring and management plan will be required for biodiversity features on site to ensure their long-term suitable management.

5.69 **Policy ESD 11:** 'Conservation Target Areas'. Where development is proposed within or adjacent to a Conservation Target Area, biodiversity surveys and a report will be required to identify constraints and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

Development which would prevent the aims of a Conservation Target Area being achieved will not be permitted. Where there is potential for development, the design and layout of the development, planning conditions or obligations will be used to secure biodiversity enhancement to help achieve the aims of the Conservation Target Area.

5.70 **Policy ESD 13:** 'Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement'. Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

5.71 Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside
- Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography
- Be inconsistent with local character
- Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity
- Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or
- Harm the historic value of the landscape.

5.72 Development proposals should have regard to the information and advice contained in the Council's Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance, and the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), and be accompanied by a landscape assessment where appropriate.

5.73 **Policy ESD 15:** 'The Character of the Built and Historic Environment'. Successful design is founded upon an understanding and respect for an area's unique built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where

development is in the vicinity of any of the district's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high-quality design that complements the asset will be essential.

5.74 New development proposals should:

- Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions
- Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions
- Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity
- Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting
- Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated 'heritage assets' (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on the Historic England at Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged
- Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation
- Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to

integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages

- Reflect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette
- Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features
- Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high quality and multi-functional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed
- Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space
- Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation
- Be compatible with up-to-date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation
- Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also see Policies ESD 1 - 5 on climate change and renewable energy)
- Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure). Well-designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the microclimate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality
- Use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible.

- 5.75 The Council will provide more detailed design and historic environment policies in the Local Plan Part 2.
- 5.76 The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. The Council expects all the issues within this policy to be positively addressed through the explanation and justification in the Design section of this Statement.
- 5.77 The Council will require for major sites/strategic sites and complex developments, Design Codes to be prepared in conjunction with the Council and local stakeholders to ensure appropriate character and high-quality design is delivered throughout.
- 5.78 **Policy ESD 17: 'Green Infrastructure'.** The district's green infrastructure network will be maintained and enhanced through the following measures:
- 5.79 Pursuing opportunities for joint working to maintain and improve the green infrastructure network, whilst protecting sites of importance for nature conservation
- 5.80 Protecting and enhancing existing sites and features forming part of the green infrastructure network and improving sustainable connectivity between sites in accordance with policies on supporting a modal shift in transport (Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections), open space, sport and recreation (Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision), adapting to climate change (Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change), SuDS (Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), biodiversity and the natural environment (Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment), Conservation Target Areas (Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas), heritage assets (Policy ESD 15) and the Oxford Canal (Policy ESD 16)
- 5.81 Ensuring that green infrastructure network considerations are integral to the planning of new development. Proposals should maximise the opportunity to maintain and extend green infrastructure links to form a multi-functional network of open space, providing opportunities for walking and cycling, and connecting the towns to the urban fringe and the wider countryside beyond

- 5.82 All strategic development sites (Section C: 'Policies for Cherwell's Places') will be required to incorporate green infrastructure provision and proposals should include details for future management and maintenance.
- 5.83 **Policy INF 1: 'Infrastructure'**. The Council's approach to infrastructure planning in the district will identify the infrastructure required to meet the district's growth, to support the strategic site allocations and to ensure delivery by:
- Working with partners, including central Government, and other local authorities, to provide physical, community and green infrastructure
 - Identifying infrastructure needs and costs, phasing of development, funding sources and responsibilities for delivery
 - Completing a Developer Contributions SPD to set out the Council's approach to the provision of essential infrastructure including affordable housing, education, transport, health, flood defences and open space
 - Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that infrastructure requirements can be met including the provision of transport, education, health, social and community facilities.

Permitted Development

- 5.84 Notwithstanding the description of development applied for as part of the Bicester Planning Proposal, the Home Office requires that the planning permission includes a provision that retains permitted development rights as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (the GPDO).
- 5.85 Specifically, the following rights are considered to be relevant to the Site and should be retained:
- Part 1 (development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse)
 - Part 2 Minor Operations
 - Part 4 Temporary buildings and uses
 - Part 10 repairs to services
 - Part 11 Heritage and Demolition
 - Part 13 Water and Sewerage

- Part 14 Renewable Energy
- Part 15 Power related development
- Part 16 Communications
- Part 18 Miscellaneous development
- Part 19 Development by the Crown or for national security purposes
 - Class A General Development by the Crown
 - Class B Extension of alteration of an operational Crown building
 - Class C Developments on operational Crown land
 - Class D Hard surfaces for operational Crown buildings
 - Class K Use of land by the Crown in relation to surveys etc
 - Class Q Development by the Crown relating to an emergency
 - Class QA Development by the Crown relating to a pandemic
 - Class R Erection of gates, fences etc by the Crown for national security purposes
 - Class S Closed circuit television cameras for national security purposes
 - Class T Electronic communication apparatus etc for national security purposes

5.88 The retention of the above permitted development rights would provide the Home Office with flexibility in the future to undertake small scale development projects not foreseen at the time of the submission of the planning application.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Each decision will be made after consideration of the planning merits of the case, this includes taking into account relevant planning matters raised by the relevant local planning authority (the local planning authority to which an application would otherwise have been made), and consultees during the representations period (and by any independent advisor if one is appointed)
- 6.2 The Bicester application is supported by a comprehensive suite of plans and technical documents that assess the likely effects of the development and identify the mitigation measures necessary to ensure that the proposal is acceptable in planning terms. Taken as a whole, the application material demonstrates that no overriding planning, environmental or technical constraints arise which would justify withholding planning permission.
- 6.3 Together with Section 7 (Technical Considerations) this section sets out the considerations that are of particular relevance to the proposed development. The planning issues relevant to the proposals are as follows:

The Principle of Development (Section 6)

- **Assessment Criteria 1:** The principle of the proposed development and the location of development;
- **Assessment Criteria 2:** The need for the proposed development;
- **Assessment Criteria 3:** The benefits of the proposed development.

The Technical Considerations (Section 7)

- **Assessment Criteria 4:** The effect of the proposed development on highway safety, access and transport infrastructure;

- **Assessment Criteria 5:** The effect of the proposed development on the health and wellbeing of existing communities, with particular regard to noise, light, air quality, access to healthcare and other local services, crime and the fear of crime, and fostering good relations/community cohesion;
- **Assessment Criteria 6:** The effect of the proposed development on cultural assets;
- **Assessment Criteria 7:** The effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area;
- **Assessment Criteria 8:** The effect of the proposed development in relation to flood risk, biodiversity and climate change.
- Other considerations.

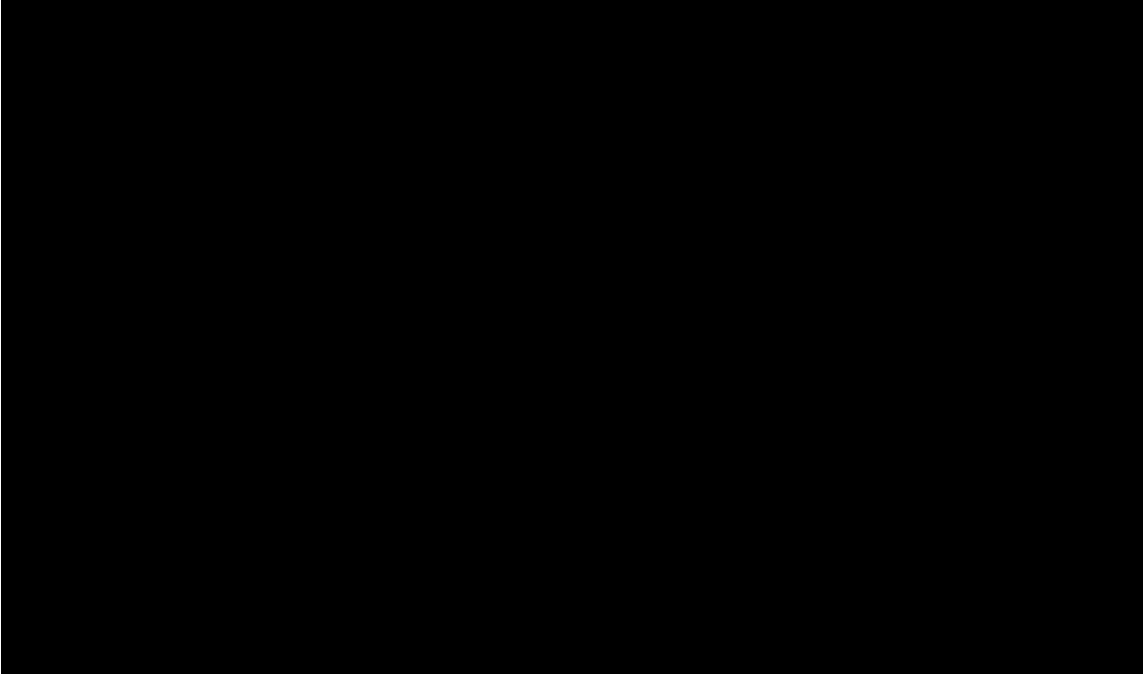
The Principle of Development

The principle of the proposed development and the location of development

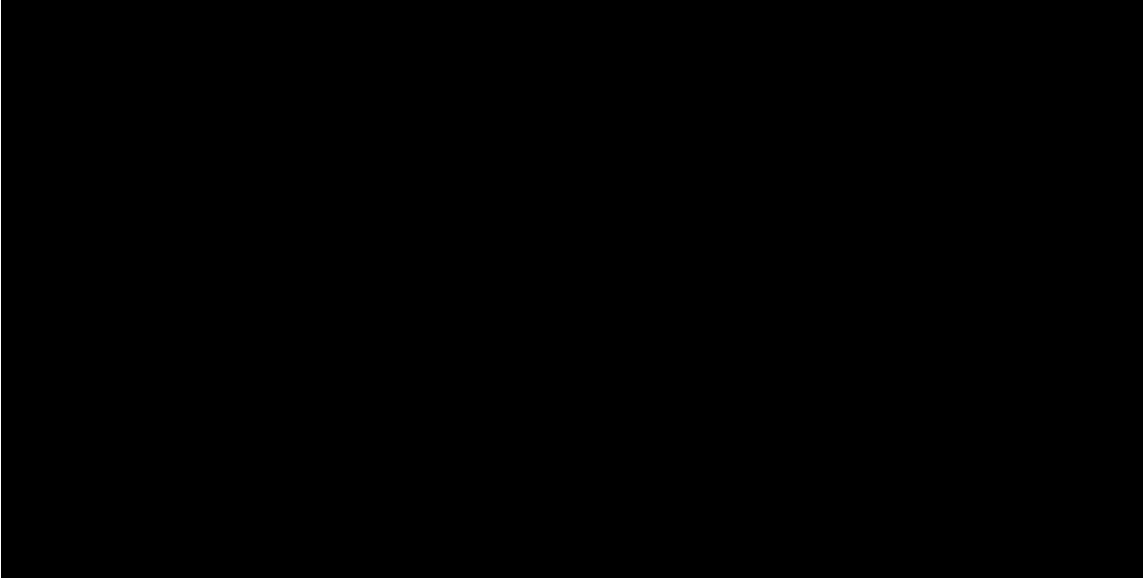
- 6.4 The principle of development is supported by the Site's status as previously developed land and by the planning history of the Site, including the earlier approval for an immigration accommodation centre. The proposal would make effective use of an existing Government-owned site that is physically separate from the nearest settlement, capable of operating on a self-contained basis [with the requirement for only limited travel by service users via shuttle buses/minibuses to access key external amenities or other necessary trips] and suited to a managed form of temporary institutional accommodation. In these circumstances, the principle of a temporary asylum accommodation use is considered acceptable having regard to the Site's characteristics, its former and approved uses, and the national policy support for the effective reuse of brownfield land.
- 6.5 In determining the 2003 planning application the Secretary of State (decision maker) did not consider that the proposed use/development would give rise to an excessive

or inappropriate traffic generation due to the needs of service users being wholly met within the site.

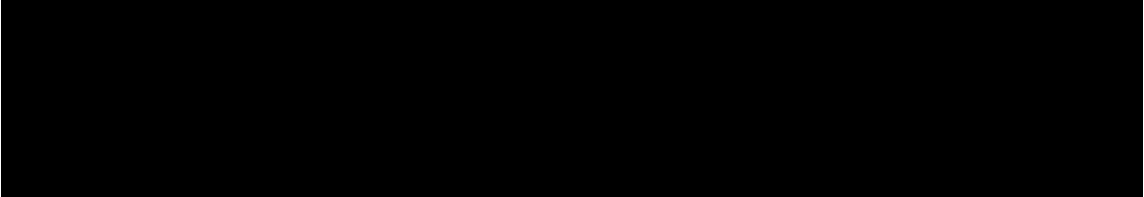
6.6



6.7



6.8



- 6.9 The earlier planning history is material because it demonstrates that the Site has previously been found to be suitable in principle for immigration accommodation and that alternative site analysis was not considered necessary in those circumstances. While the present application must be considered on its own merits, that history is relevant context supporting the suitability of the Site for a managed Home Office use of this nature.
- 6.10 The development site is 'Previously Developed Land' and is circa 307 metres from HMP Bullingdon. HMP Bullingdon lies within a 21-hectare site and accommodates between 865 and 1,114 category B/C male inmates. The nearest built-up residential area is located approximately 800 metres to the east of the site [Village of Piddington]. This village is separated by arable fields and is visually screened by hedgerows and wooded areas.
- 6.11 The reuse of 'Previously Developed Land' is strongly supported by **Chapter 11** of the NPPF (2024) and adopted Local Plan Policy **BSC2** 'The Effective and Efficient Use of Land-Brownfield Land'.
- 6.12 The nearest GP surgery to the Site is Unity Health Brill, on Thame Road, Brill, located c.4.5 km south of the Site. This surgery is currently under capacity and accepting new patients. The next nearest is Langford Medical Practice on Nightingale Place, located c.4.9 km northwest of the Site and also under capacity. The Bicester scheme includes the provision of social infrastructure, including health and welfare facilities to meet the majority of service user needs within the confines of the site. The proposed development would not adversely impact on the capacity of local health care services as the proposals would include health, well-being and leisure facilities on-site. The proposed development would provide for the health and wellbeing needs of service users in compliance with Local Plan **Policy BSC 8** 'Securing Health and Well-Being'.

The need for the proposed development

- 6.13 There is a clear and compelling need for the proposed development. The proposal forms part of the Home Office's wider programme to secure suitable temporary accommodation capacity for asylum seekers and would provide a safe, secure and operationally effective facility supported by appropriate welfare, provision for

healthcare and administrative infrastructure. The accompanying Statement of National Importance and Emergency explains why the proposal is of national importance and required as a matter of urgency. That need is a material consideration of very substantial weight.

- 6.14 The supporting 'Statement of National Importance and Emergency' demonstrates that the development is (i) of national importance and (ii) required as a matter of urgency to provide an appropriate facility to accommodate single adult males who have arrived in the UK illegally while their asylum claims are being processed. See Statement of National Importance for further information.
- 6.15 The need for the proposed development is substantial and clearly justified, reflecting a nationally driven requirement for secure accommodation provision, combined with the need for flexible, efficiently delivered infrastructure capable of responding to evolving operational demands.

The benefits of the proposed development

- 6.16 The proposed development would deliver a number of important planning benefits. It would provide essential public service infrastructure in support of the Home Office's statutory duties; deliver a safe, secure and well-managed temporary accommodation facility; make effective use of previously developed land in Government ownership; and provide a self-contained layout that minimises reliance on off-site services.
- 6.17 The proposal would also facilitate the delivery of accommodation and support services in a more efficient and coordinated manner than dispersed or less suitable forms of provision. These benefits attract substantial weight in the planning balance.
- 6.18 The proposed development would provide Nationally Important and Urgent public service infrastructure. The proposed development is urgently required and is essential to support the Home Office's statutory duties to provide safe, secure and well-managed accommodation. In doing so, the proposals contribute to the social objectives of sustainable development set out in the NPPF, supporting inclusive, safe and accessible environments (paragraph 8 and paragraph 96), whilst also promoting public safety and security through appropriate design and management (paragraph 102).

- 6.19 The asylum accommodation would help reduce the dependency on private sector hotel accommodation whilst offering integrated services to service users.

7.0 TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 This section draws together the principal technical considerations arising from the proposed development. The supporting technical reports demonstrate that the effects of the proposal have been appropriately assessed and that, where necessary, mitigation can be secured through design development, management measures and planning controls. On that basis, no technical matter has been identified that would preclude the grant of planning permission.

The effect of the proposed development on highway safety, access and transport infrastructure

(a) Highways Safety and Access

- 7.2 [REDACTED].
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the anticipated level of traffic generation would not, in principle, render the development unacceptable. The proposal would also operate as a largely self-contained facility, thereby reducing the need for regular off-site movements by service users. Shuttle buses/minibuses will be available for occasions where service users are required to travel to access key external amenities or other necessary trips.
- 7.3 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- 7.4 The Oxfordshire County Council 'Parking Standards for New Developments' (Paragraph 8.7) states that the type of land use should determine the maximum amount of vehicle parking at the development site. The Parking Standards state that any reduction in the provision of parking below the maximum threshold will need to be justified and assessed on its own merits having consideration to the following: (1) Trip rates (2) Oxfordshire County Council Transport and Connectivity Plan policies (3) the specific user group [employees and visitors] at the site (4) site location and risk of displaced parking.

- 7.5 The proposed development is unique in character and operation. In determining an appropriate level of on-site car parking the Transport Statement (Section 4.6 on page 30) has determined the Oxfordshire County Council standard for land use F1 'Non-residential institutions' to be most appropriate standard for the proposed development.
- 7.6 In compliance with the OCC F1 'Non-residential institutions' parking standard the proposed development would provide [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for staff and visitors. This meets the Oxfordshire County Council standard (based on F1 'Non-residential institutions') and accommodates the maximum number of staff expected on site at any one time, including overlap for shift changes and visitor parking.
- 7.7 The same approach was adopted for the provision of cycle parking spaces. The Oxfordshire County Council minimum cycle parking standard for 'Non-residential institutions' is [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- 7.8 There are no highways safety reasons that would make the site inappropriate for the proposed use.

(b) Transport Infrastructure

- 7.9 The site benefits from access to the wider strategic highway network via the A41 road and A34 road, which are the principal routes in the area. These corridors provide onward connections to the M40 motorway, facilitating north–south and regional travel towards Oxford, Bicester, and beyond. While not immediately adjacent to the site, these strategic routes are accessible within a reasonable driving distance, offering integration with the national motorway network.
- 7.10 Section 5.3 [on page 34] of the Transport Statement calculates the number of trips generated by the proposed development including service users arriving to the site by minibus, service vehicles, visitors and employees. The proposed development would increase traffic above the existing baseline on the B4011 by [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

- 7.11 In Section 7 [on page 42], the Transport Statement considered the traffic impacts [Development at full capacity] on the site access junction. It has been determined that site junction will operate with plenty of spare capacity in 2027 and 2031.
- 7.12 The Transport Statement concludes that the proposed development would not result in a severe residual cumulative impact on the surrounding highway network and therefore no off-site mitigation would be required. The proposed development is supported by Chapter 9: 'Promoting sustainable transport' of the NPPF (2024).

The effect of the proposed development on the health and wellbeing of existing communities, with particular regard to noise, light, air quality, access to healthcare and other local services, crime and the fear of crime, and fostering good relations/community cohesion.

(c) Air Quality and Noise Impacts

Noise

- 7.13 The majority of existing ambient noise levels surrounding the site are associated with road traffic from the. The primary noise receptors within the surrounding area are the residential houses in neighbouring areas, PRow users, recreational ground users (Bicester Garrison Sports Ground) directly adjacent west and HM Prison (HMP) Bullingdon. The nearest Noise Important Area (NIA) is c.2.8 km northwest and is along the A41.

Construction Noise and Vibration

- 7.14 The potential noise and vibration impacts made during the construction phase of development is considered to be minimal due to the development consisting of prefabricated modular units.
- 7.15 The noise and vibration impacts from vehicle movements and demolition and earthworks will be mitigated as far as practical through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Potential Operational Impacts

- 7.16 The site will be designed (both internally and externally) to minimise any noise impacts in private amenity areas, habitable rooms and outside residential receptors including HMP Bullingdon and residential receptors in Piddington.
- 7.17 As referenced in the Outline Operational Plan (section 4 above), noise on site will be monitored and measures will be in place to control and minimise noise complaints.

Air Quality

- 7.18 The Site is not located within an existing Air Quality Management Area. The nearest sensitive receptors include HMP Bullingdon and residential properties within Piddington and the wider surrounding area.

Potential Construction Impacts

- 7.19 The potential for dust and particulate emissions during construction would be reduced by the use of prefabricated modular units. Any residual effects can be appropriately managed through standard construction-phase mitigation, including dust suppression, vehicle management and site controls secured through a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Potential Operational Impacts

- 7.20 On the basis of the preliminary transport information, the operational vehicle movements associated with the development are not expected to result in significant adverse air quality effects at nearby receptors or within the nearest Air Quality Management Area.

(d) Lighting

- 7.21 The approval of a lighting scheme is to be secured by a planning pre-commencement condition. The approved lighting scheme shall seek to ensure that artificial lighting is properly managed and does not result in obtrusive glare, light spill, or skyglow that could harm local amenity and wildlife.

(e) Access to healthcare and other local services

- 7.22 The proposed development includes space for on-site health provision, and welfare and support facilities and has been designed to operate as a self-contained accommodation centre. In practice, this would materially reduce reliance on local services and infrastructure. The Site's management arrangements, together with the supporting welfare and healthcare provision, would ensure that service users' day-to-day needs are addressed within the Site wherever reasonably possible.

(f) crime and the fear of crime

- 7.23 The Outline Operational Plan establishes a clear and proportionate framework for the safe operation of the Site. A full Operational Management Plan will be prepared with the appointment of the Service Provider. A Security Management Plan has been prepared and is summarised at paragraph 7.52 below. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(g) Fostering good relations/community cohesion

- 7.24 The reuse of the existing military site would provide a more controlled, secure and operationally resilient environment to manage asylum accommodation compared to hotels. The Site's self-contained nature, defined boundaries, and controlled access would help mitigate cohesion impacts and reduce the potential for public disorder. A full, iterative Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared for submission with this proposal.

The effect of the proposed development on cultural assets

- 7.25 An Archaeological and Heritage Desk Based Assessment has been undertaken to identify the significance of the historic environment within the Site and its wider surroundings. The assessment concludes that the proposed development would not result in harm to the setting of nearby listed buildings and that any archaeological interest within the Site can be appropriately managed through proportionate mitigation secured by condition. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in heritage and archaeological terms.

(a) Designated heritage assets

- 7.26 The AHDBA concluded that the lack of intervisibility between the proposed development site and the statutory listed buildings in Piddington [due to the intervening vegetation, buildings and topography] meant that the proposed development would not result in any change to the setting of the listed buildings nor would it cause any material harm.

(b) Archaeological remains

- 7.27 The AHDBA identified a moderate to high archaeological potential at the site. On the basis that the current hardstanding remains in-situ (Scenario 1) it has been determined that there would be little or no impact on any underlying surviving archaeological remains. On the basis that the hardstanding is to be removed (Scenario 2) then a planning condition requiring the undertaking of archaeological monitoring during demolition and construction should be attached to the consent.
- 7.28 The proposed development would not harm the setting of a listed building and a planning condition requiring the completion of a Written Scheme of Investigation is agreed in compliance with Local Plan **Policy ESD 15** 'The Character of the Built and Historic Environment'.

The effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area

- 7.29 A Landscape and Visual Statement has been prepared to assess the effects of the development on the character and appearance of the area. The evidence indicates that the proposal would be seen in the context of an existing previously developed military site and that the modular accommodation would be materially lower in scale than the principal existing warehouse buildings. Subject to detailed design and landscape treatment, the proposal would not result in unacceptable landscape or visual effects.
- 7.30 The supporting Landscape and Visual Statement concludes that the proposed development would unlikely bring about any perceptible landscape and visual change due to the existing buildings on the site. It was also noted that the existing buildings on site are much larger than the proposed modular units (no greater than 6 metres in height).
- 7.31 The proposed development would not cause additional harm to the topography and character of the landscape nor would it result in the coalescence of any settlement. The proposed development is supported by adopted Local Plan **Policy C7**, **Policy C8** and **Policy C15**: 'Landscape Conservation'.

The effect of the proposed development in relation to flood risk, biodiversity and climate change

(a) Flood Risk (Fluvial Sources)

- 7.32 A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared to consider all relevant sources of flood risk. The assessment confirms that, whilst parts of the Site are affected by surface water flood risk and a limited area of fluvial flood risk, the proposal can be designed and managed so that development is safe for its lifetime and does not increase flood risk elsewhere. These matters can be addressed through a detailed drainage strategy and sustainable drainage measures secured through the planning process.

(b) Flood Risk (Surface Water)

- 7.33 The Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Risk Mapping identifies considerable areas of the site to be at high risk of surface water flooding. An appropriate surface

water drainage strategy shall be implemented in accordance with **Policy ESD 6** 'Sustainable Flood Risk Management' and **Policy ESD 7** 'Sustainable Drainage Systems'.

(c) Biodiversity and Arboricultural Considerations

Biodiversity

7.34 The ecological evidence identifies that further targeted survey work and appropriate mitigation will be required as the design progresses. However, the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment provide a clear basis for concluding that the proposal can be brought forward in a manner that avoids unacceptable ecological effects, subject to the implementation of mitigation, management and, where necessary, licensing requirements. The proposal is therefore capable of complying with relevant biodiversity policy requirements.

- (i) The Arncott Bridge Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI] Impact Zone – Specific mitigation requirements to be discussed with Natural England.
- (ii) Badgers - Pre-construction checks for badgers is recommended to determine whether site conditions have changed since the survey (May 2026), and to confirm the presence or likely absence of badgers from the site prior to works commencing.
- (iii) Hazel Dormouse – further site surveys are required to inform the site mitigation strategy and licensing requirements.
- (iv) Bats (Roosting) – a bat (Roosting) survey to determine if mitigation measures are required as well as licensing requirements.
- (v) Bats (in trees) - a bat survey to be completed prior to the detailed design stage.
- (vi) Bats (foraging and commuting) – an activity survey required to inform the mitigation strategy.
- (vii) Birds – further surveys for breeding birds are required to inform the detailed design stages.
- (viii) Great Crested Newts and Common Amphibians – further assessment required to determine the presence of GCN and mitigation strategy (if appropriate).
- (ix) Reptiles – a reptile survey is required and will be carried out.

- 7.35 The above protected species surveys are to be carried out and used to inform the appropriate mitigation measures that will prevent or limit harm to protected species. All mitigation measures are to be included as part of the detailed design. The proposed development would incorporate sufficient ecological mitigation to prevent or minimise any adverse impacts on protected species and habitats. Where harm to protected habitats and species is unavoidable then the benefits of the development should clearly outweigh the harm identified.
- 7.36 The supporting Habitats Regulation Assessment concluded that there were no (i) recorded Habitat sites within 15 km of the site (ii) no Special Areas of Conservation designated for bats within 20 km and (iii) no Habitat sites with hydrological connectivity to the site.
- 7.37 The proposed development site is not located within any recreational disturbance Zone of Influence.
- 7.38 The development would unlikely have any significant effect on habitat sites nor would the proposals impede the achievement of the conservation objectives of any Habitats sites which are being or will be delivered under Article 6(1) or 6(2) of the Habitats Directive.
- 7.39 The proposed development (including mitigation) would be made compliant with national planning policies including **Chapter 15** 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment', **Paragraph 193(a) 'Biodiversity'** and **Paragraph 193(b) 'SSSI'** and adopted Local Plan **Policy C1, C2 and C4** 'Nature Conservation', **Policy ESD 10:** 'Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment' and **Policy ESD 11** 'Conservation Target Areas'.

Arboricultural

- 7.40 The Tree Survey did not identify Tree Protection Orders, Ancient Woodland or Ancient/Veteran/Notable Trees on site.

- 7.41 Only one individual tree (T30) of high quality and value [Category A] was recorded on site. T30 poses a constraint to the proposed development and will be incorporated into the site masterplan at the detailed design stage.
- 7.42 A total of 16 individual Category B trees were recorded at the site. Category B trees offer moderate arboricultural, landscape and conservation values to the site and will be retained wherever possible.
- 7.43 A total of 18 individual Category C trees were recorded at the site. The removal of a small number of Category C features would be possible without a noticeable adverse impact on the site's overall arboricultural quality.
- 7.44 One individual tree (T08) and seven groups (G14 to G17, G19, G22 & G23) trees have been identified as Category U and are unsuitable for retention due to their condition.
- 7.45 The completion of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment is to be secured via planning condition and used to inform the final and detailed masterplanning stage of the project.

(d) Climate Change

- 7.46 The proposed development has been conceived as a temporary modular scheme capable of efficient delivery, reduced material waste and improved operational energy performance when compared with more traditional forms of construction. Whilst further detail will be developed through the next stage of design, the proposal has clear potential to incorporate energy efficient design measures and appropriate low carbon technologies in a manner proportionate to its temporary nature and operational requirements.
- 7.47 As shown in Figure 12 below, the closest active District Heating (DH) System is currently serving 'Elmsbrook' at the North West Bicester Eco-Town and lies 8.5 km northwest of the site. Existing capacity limits and the extensive pipework required would likely render a connection impractical for the temporary asylum seeker accommodation.

- 7.48 In accordance with Local Plan Policy ESD4 '*Decentralised Energy Systems*' the Home Office will assess whether the site is suitable for a Combined Heat and Power System (CHP). The requirement to carry out a feasibility assessment for CHP and DH will be secured via a pre-commencement condition.

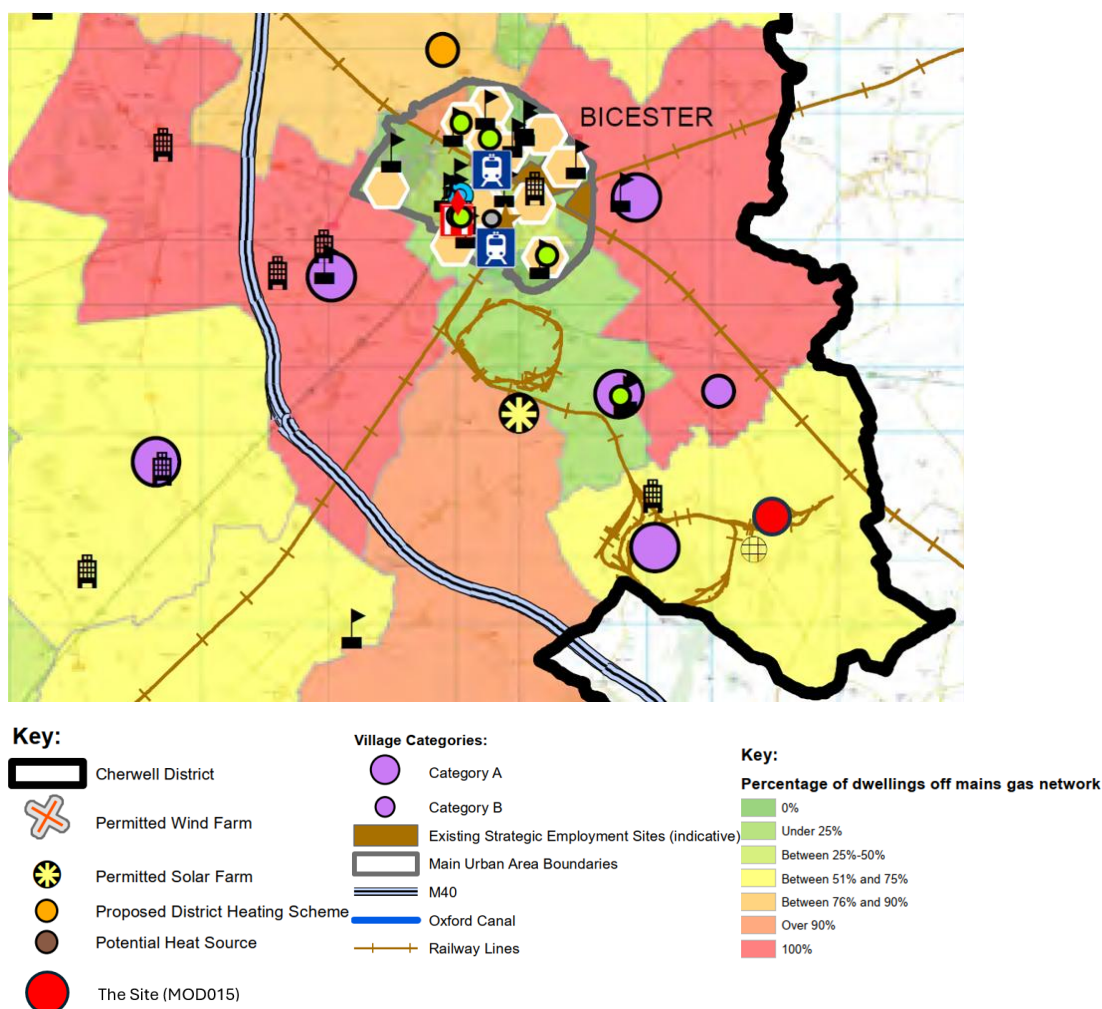


Figure 12: Extracted from the 'Renewable & Low Carbon Energy Map' on page 368 of the adopted Local Plan (20.07.2015)

- 7.49 The proposed development comprises modular units that will be manufactured off-site. This method of construction will reduce material waste and carbon emissions and would embody less carbon than traditional builds. The proposed development would achieve better energy efficiency during the operational phase.

- 7.50 Further improvements to energy efficiency are to be explored when considering site orientation and the layout of development at the detailed design stage.
- 7.51 The applicant is committed to incorporating suitable energy generating technologies where feasible and a feasibility assessment of the potential for on-site renewable energy provision, specifically Photovoltaic Panels), will be completed at the detailed design stage. In accordance with adopted Local Plan Policy ESD5 '*Renewable Energy*' the requirement to assess the feasibility for the significant on-site renewable energy provision (above the Building Regulation Standards) will be secured by a pre-commencement condition.
- 7.52 If full compliance with the policy requirements is deemed to be unfeasible due to site constraints, technical limitations or viability issues then evidence demonstrating that all reasonable options have been explored and that the proposed approach represents the most practical and proportionate solution should be considered acceptable.

Other considerations

Land Contamination

- 7.53 A preliminary Geo-environmental and Geotechnical Assessment included a ground contamination risk assessment undertaken for the site. Due to the previous use of the site, there is the potential for contamination in the made ground, including asbestos containing material (ACM).
- 7.54 The presence and extent of potential contamination will be assessed further by undertaking targeted sampling in the areas of known made ground and the area where munitions were handled and stored. The requirement for further assessment is to be secured by a pre-commencement condition.

Unexploded Ordnance

- 7.55 A Preliminary Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Assessment has been undertaken to consider the potential for UXO to be present within the Site during ground-disturbing

works. No evidence has been identified within the public domain of past UXO incidents affecting the Site, and the overall risk is assessed as low.

Security Management

7.56 A Security Management Plan (SMP) has been prepared to establish the governance, operational arrangements and control measures required to ensure the safe and secure operation of the site.

7.57 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Equality Management

- 7.62 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken to consider the implications of the proposed use of the Site as temporary asylum accommodation, with regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 7.63 The EqIA identifies that the operation of the Site results in direct discrimination in relation to age and sex, as the site is restricted to adult males aged 18-65.
- 7.64 However, this is assessed as lawful and justified, constituting a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, specifically, the Home Office's statutory duty to provide accommodation suited to the needs and profile of the asylum population.
- 7.65 The evidence demonstrates that the majority of asylum applicants fall within this demographic group, and alternative accommodation is provided for other cohorts, including women, families and children.
- 7.66 For other protected characteristics including disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and gender reassignment, the assessment concludes that the proposals are not directly or indirectly discriminatory, with appropriate mitigation measures in place.
- 7.67 These include individual needs assessments, safeguarding arrangements, relocation where appropriate, and provision of facilities such as multi-faith spaces, culturally appropriate catering and welfare support.
- 7.68 The EqIA also considers the wider impacts on equality of opportunity and community relations. It confirms that:

- Service users will receive equivalent levels of support to other accommodation within the asylum estate;
- The site will include on-site services and facilities to reduce pressure on local infrastructure; and
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement, including with local authorities, police and health providers, will support community cohesion and mitigate potential tensions.

7.69 Specific measures include the establishment of a multi-Agency Forum, resident induction processes, behavioural expectations, and continued monitoring of impacts on local services and community relations.

7.70 Overall, the EqIA concludes that, while some differential treatment arises from the operational model of the site, these impacts are lawful, proportionate and appropriately mitigated. The assessment confirms that the proposals meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will remain subject to ongoing review as the site is developed and operated.

Fire Safety

7.71 A Fire Safety Strategy has been prepared to inform the design of the proposed development, setting out how the scheme will meet the requirements of Part B of the Building Regulations and relevant fire safety standards. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

7.72 [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

7.73 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

7.74 At this stage, the strategy is outline in nature, with some elements, including detailed escape distances, structural fire resistance and space separation, remaining subject to further design development as more detailed building information becomes available.

7.75 Overall, the Fire Safety Strategy demonstrates that a compliant and robust fire safety approach can be achieved, with clear measures in place to ensure safe evacuation, limit fire spread and provide appropriate access for emergency services. Residual matters are capable of being resolved through detailed design and Building Control approval. The proposals are in accordance with the Building Regulations 2010 (Part B).

Utilities and Infrastructure

7.76 The design and layout of the proposed development has been informed by the Utilities and Infrastructure Assessment. Based on the initial site surveys which identified existing site infrastructure and constraints, the living accommodation for Service Users has been located away from the overhead powerlines and the area beneath the powerlines is to be used for parking vehicles.

7.77 The Utilities and Infrastructure Assessment concludes that whilst existing capacities within the utility networks requires further survey, the provision of short-term infrastructure [including power generation and foul water] will be immediately available to meet the full requirements of the proposed development.

7.78 Following the further investigation of the existing foul water and surface water drainage system, the need to meet the longer-term power generation, foul and surface water drainage requirements will be secured via pre-commencement planning condition.

Existing and Proposed Foul and Surface Water Drainage

- 7.79 The site is currently served by a combination of formal and informal surface water drainage features. The existing foul water sewage system requires further investigation to determine the most cost effective and viable option to meet expected foul and surface water drainage requirements. As mentioned above, measures to manage foul water in the short-term is available and is ready to meet the immediate needs of the proposed development.
- 7.80 Section 11.2 and 11.3 of the supporting Drainage Design Statement [from page 37 onwards] outlines the foul and surface water drainage strategy for the proposed development. The foul and surface water drainage strategy including its implementation will be secured by a pre-commencement planning condition.

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Pre-application Advice from Natural England

- 8.1 The applicant sought pre-application advice from Natural England on 21st May 2026 in relation to the proposed development and specifically regarding the supporting:
- Habitat Regulations Screening Report
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- 8.2 Natural England issued a formal response letter on 4th June 2026 (Natural England reference: DAS/A024337) agreeing with the conclusions of the supporting Habitat Regulations Screening Report (see below) that the proposal can be screened out from further stages of assessment because significant effects are unlikely to occur, either alone or in combination.
- 8.3 The proposed development is located 1.8 km from Arncott Bridge Meadows SSSI. Natural England has considered that the proposal could have potential significant effects on Arncott Bridge SSSI and has requested further information regarding hydrological impact pathways between the application site and the SSSI in order to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.4 The applicant sought pre-application advice from MHCLG during the preparation of the planning application and submitted a draft of the EIA Screening Opinion for review. This review informed the final EIA Screening Opinion document.
- 8.5 The proposed development is a 'Schedule 2 development' under Section 10(b), as the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares. The proposed development provides up to 1,256 bedspaces and the site exceeds the 5ha threshold (total site area is 10.22ha). The proposed development meets the Schedule 2 threshold.

8.6 The request for an EIA screening opinion for the proposed development is supported by an assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment in line with the requirements of Regulation 6(2) of the EIA Regulations. The screening assessment considers the likely significant effects on the following:

- Access, Traffic and Transport
- Noise and Vibration
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Hydrology, Flood Risk and Drainage
- Ecology
- Land Quality, and Ground Conditions
- Archaeology and Heritage
- Socio-economic and Human Health
- Lighting
- Major Accidents and Natural Disasters
- Waste
- Climate Change
- Cumulative Effects

8.7 The screening assessment concludes that the proposed development is unlikely to result in potentially significant effects on the environment either during construction, when operational and at the decommissioning phases. It is determined that the proposed development would not constitute an 'EIA development'.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

8.8 Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 mandates the appropriate authority to assess the potential impacts of a proposal to ensure it will not adversely affect the integrity of a protected ecological site.

8.9 The [Stage 1] Habitats Regulation Screening Assessment confirms that there are no Habitats sites within 15 km of the proposed development site, the nearest Habitats site being the Oxford Meadows SAC, which is approximately 15.8km west of the site. The

proposed development therefore is not considered to form functionally linked land capable of supporting qualifying features of any Habitats sites.

- 8.10 There are no surface watercourses that hydrologically connect the site and any Habitats sites and the site is not within any Sensitive Catchment Areas and is outside any Recreational Disturbance Zone of Influence.
- 8.11 The Stage 1 HRA Screening Assessment concludes that the proposed development will not have a likely significant effect upon any Habitats sites during construction and operation.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

Proposed Development

- 9.1 The Secretary of State seeks planning permission via the Urgent Crown Development route for the temporary use of the Site for non-detained asylum accommodation and associated operational development. The description of development is set out in full in Section 1 and 3 of this statement.
- 9.2 A supporting statement has been prepared by the Home Office which sets out the reasons why the Bicester Planning Proposal is both Nationally Important and Urgent.
- 9.3 The principle for permitting the development of an asylum accommodation facility is established by the previous planning approval (case reference LPA Ref: 02/01045/GD, PINS Ref: APP/C3105/V/02/1097456).

Planning Considerations

- 9.4 The full range of technical and other material considerations has been carefully assessed in order to inform the proposal, identify likely effects and establish the mitigation required to ensure that the development is acceptable in planning terms. The evidence submitted with the application demonstrates that the temporary use of the Site for non-detained asylum accommodation, together with the associated operational development and infrastructure, is acceptable when considered in the round.

Technical Considerations

- 9.5 The technical assessments submitted in support of the application demonstrate that the proposed development can be delivered without giving rise to unacceptable impacts in relation to transport, heritage, landscape, ecology, flood risk, contamination, security, fire safety or amenity. Collectively, the assessment work confirms that potential effects have been appropriately identified and can be effectively mitigated

through design development, management measures and, where necessary, planning conditions.

Development Benefits

9.6 The proposed development will deliver the following planning benefits:

- Provide a fit-for-purpose and self-contained facility to support the Home Secretary's statutory powers, enabling non-detained asylum accommodation to be delivered safely, securely and efficiently;
- Improve operational efficiency through the provision of integrated on-site accommodation, healthcare, welfare and supporting infrastructure;
- Make effective use of previously developed land and an existing building, reducing the need for extensive new construction and associated environmental impacts;
- Deliver high quality and energy efficient modular development, contributing to reduced carbon emissions and improved environmental performance;
- Generate economic benefits through construction activity and ongoing operational employment;
- Provide a safe and well-managed environment through controlled access, clear site layout and integrated management arrangements;
- Deliver environmental and sustainability benefits, including biodiversity protection, drainage improvements and climate resilience measures;
- Reduce off-site impacts through the self-contained nature of the development and implementation of sustainable transport measures.

Overall Conclusions

- 9.7 For the reasons set out in this Planning Proposal Statement and the accompanying application documents, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms. The proposed development is of National Importance and is Urgently required as demonstrated in the accompanying Statement of National Importance and Emergency.
- 9.8 The proposed development would deliver a temporary, self-contained and well-managed accommodation facility on brownfield land. Planning permission is therefore respectfully sought.