[redacted]

Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality analysis to inform the Secretary of State's decision whether to grant planning permission for the proposed change of use and associated operational development at MOD Bicester.

This document records the analysis undertaken by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ("MHCLG") pursuant to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty ("PSED") as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act"). This duty requires the Secretary of State to pay due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics which should be considered are:

- age
- disability
- sex
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation

Please note that in relation to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnerships the department is required to have due regard only to the first point in the first paragraph above.

[redacted]

[redacted]

SECTION 1

1.1 Planning permission decision.

The Decision

The decision that this PSED analysis will inform is whether to grant planning permission for the proposed development at MOD Bicester ("the development"). The development proposal relates to the temporary change of use of the former defence storage and distribution centre in connection with the phased provision of non-detained asylum accommodation. The proposal includes the retention and change of use of Building A6, demolition of other existing buildings and structures, vegetation clearance, new modular accommodation, and associated infrastructure and facilities. The site would accommodate up to 1,256 Service Users. The recommended conditions would require the permitted use to cease no later than ten years from the decision notice, with removal and reinstatement undertaken in accordance with the time-limit and reinstatement requirements.

The application proposes delivery in three phases, as summarised below. Detailed phasing, including the sequence of development and occupation and the provision of shared infrastructure and mitigation, would be secured through the phasing plan required by recommended Condition 28.

.

- **Phase 1:** Modular accommodation for 408 Service Users – including standard accommodation for 384 Service Users and 24 medical isolation units.
- **Phase 2:** Construction of accommodation for 216 Service Users – including standard accommodation for 208 Service Users and 8 medical isolation units.
- **Phase 3:** Erection of accommodation for 632 Service Users – including standard accommodation for 600 Service Users and 32 medical isolation units.

If planning permission is granted and the development is implemented, accommodation would be provided predominantly in modular buildings, with new modular accommodation limited to two storeys and seven metres in height. Additional modular units would be provided containing shower, toilet facilities, and quiet rooms. In addition, shared supporting, ancillary functions for Service Users would be provided including reception area, kitchen/dining, laundry, health care facility, dining hall, kitchen, multi-faith centre, cycle storage, classrooms, communal areas, gym, recreation space, and sports pitches – with the aim of making the site as self-sufficient as possible to minimise the need for travel and to reduce impacts on local services.

There would also be staff facilities on site, including security/police office, site offices, welfare space, security gate house, staff/visitor parking, facilities for deliveries, storerooms, and refuse/recycling areas. Planning permission is granted and the development implemented, security management arrangements would be addressed through the Operational Management, Safeguarding and Community Cohesion Plan required by recommended Condition 17. The Home Office proposes CCTV, duress and door-entry systems and a system for logging Service Users in and out, but this

[redacted]

[redacted]

assessment does not treat those particular arrangements as fixed requirements of the permission. The proposed use is non-detained accommodation. The effectiveness of the security arrangements would depend on the approved details and their implementation; residual safety and safeguarding risks would remain relevant to the decision.

Other associated infrastructure would include attenuation features, pumping infrastructure, a hydrant tank, roads and accessways. The preferred foul-drainage solution is connection to the public sewer, with temporary cesspool storage and tankering proposed pending connection. Any alternative on-site treatment arrangement would require separate justification and assessment.

Policy Background

The Government has committed to ending hotel use for asylum seekers by the end of this Parliament and to deliver on this, alternative more sustainable accommodation is needed.

From 2004 to 2020, there were between 22,000 and 46,000 people claiming asylum in the UK each year. However, since the second half of 2021 there has been a notable increase, peaking at 110,051 in the year ending September 2025. In the year ending September 2025, the UK received the fifth largest number of asylum seekers in the EU+, and the fifteenth largest intake when measured per head of population. The number of people claiming has fallen in the latest year but remains high compared to the previous two decades. As of 31 December 2025, 107,000 individuals were in receipt of asylum support, including 31,000 (29%) in hotels. While the initial decision backlog has reduced to 64,000 people (relating to 49,000 cases) 35% of people waiting for an initial decision had been waiting for over a year; demonstrating that the absolute number requiring accommodation remains high.

The Home Office (“HO”) as the applicant, has sought to meet the shortfall in accommodation through hotels. However, this is largely out of necessity rather than choice. Hotels are not the most suitable accommodation for most cohorts of asylum seekers and their planning status as asylum accommodation has been a repeated source of dispute, leading to widespread legal challenges by Local Authorities on planning and wider public law grounds. Additionally, the prolonged use of hotels has placed a strain on local communities, becoming a flashpoint for community tensions, leading to an increase in protests and violence.

Large sites are an important part of the HO’s accommodation strategy, serving a critical role by providing predictable and dependable capacities which help aid better capacity planning and estate management. Such sites are offered by the MOD and are therefore constrained by availability and location. Sites are considered against feasibility assessments, with only the most deliverable progressed. Suitability assessments for the newly proposed sites are ongoing and will consider a range of factors including safety, security, operational deliverability, planning requirements, and the impact on local services and communities.

[redacted]

[redacted]

The proposed site would provide a controllable and self-contained component of the wider asylum estate, which can be brought into use to meet UK-wide pressures, reducing reliance on less suitable contingency accommodation across multiple local authority areas, and improving the resilience of the estate.

The purpose of the proposal is to bring forward accommodation and associated operational facilities on a former defence storage and distribution site, supported by enabling works and technical mitigation. The HO presents the former MOD site at Bicester as a more controlled and operationally resilient alternative intended to help mitigate cohesion and public order risks. This assessment does not assume that those risks would be reduced compared with alternative accommodation; it considers the site-specific effects, the mitigation secured by the recommended conditions and the residual risks.

The application proposes that development will be phased using existing hardstanding and access infrastructure where practicable, but that this remains dependent on resolution of several technical matters including:

- Targeted ecological surveys with appropriate mitigation
- Land contamination
- Foul water and surface water drainage management
- Utilities capacity
- Ground and hardstanding suitability (including potential excavation works)
- Environmental constraints

Need for the Proposed Development

The HO considers that there is a clear need for the proposal. The proposal forms part of the HO'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. From 2004 to 2020 there were between 22,000 and 46,000 people claiming asylum in the UK each year. However, since the second half of 2021 there has been a notable increase, peaking at 110,051 in the year ending September 2025.

The HO is dealing with unprecedented numbers of asylum seekers requiring support. Hotels are not the most suitable accommodation for most cohorts of asylum seekers and their planning status as asylum accommodation has been a repeated source of dispute, leading to widespread legal challenges by Local Planning Authorities ("LPA") on planning and wider public law grounds. The prolonged use of hotels has placed a strain on local communities, becoming a flashpoint for community tensions, leading to an increase in protests and violence.

The HO presents the proposal as a more controlled and operationally resilient alternative intended to help mitigate cohesion and public order risks. Unlike hotels located within, or immediately adjacent to, town centres and residential neighbourhoods, the Bicester site is

[redacted]

[redacted]

on an established military estate, with defined boundaries and gated access from B4011, which could support security management. The proposed use would nevertheless be non-detained. Furthermore, the layout and infrastructure of the site is designed for communal use, unlike hotels which are not intended for sustained residential accommodation. These features do not, by themselves, establish that community-cohesion or public-order outcomes would be better than under alternative accommodation arrangements; the assessment takes account of the relevant conditions and residual risks.

The HO considers that the proposed development at MOD Bicester meets multiple requirements to be determined as a development of national importance in accordance with the guidelines set out in the WMS made on 13 February 2025. On 13 July 2026, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning concluded that the development was of nationally importance and needed to be carried out urgently.
The evidence provided through the submission identifies MOD Bicester as a deliverable location, with reuse of hardstanding, modular construction, and phased build-out offering programme advantages.

Who will be affected by the decision?

1. Future users of the accommodation and associated facilities, including people who may share protected characteristics.
2. Construction workers, operational staff, and contractors who will access, build, manage or maintain the site.
3. Existing residents and communities in the surrounding area, including nearby villages, road users and those who may be affected by construction traffic, site operations, wastewater arrangements, emergency infrastructure, or environmental effects.

[redacted]

SECTION 2

2.1 Summary of the evidence considered in demonstrating due regard to PSED.

Documents submitted to MHCLG by the HO.

This analysis against the requirements of PSED draws on:

- Site Location Plan — BIC-DR-AR-100105-P01.
- Site Parameters Plan — BIC-DR-AR-100107-P01.
- Site Demolition Plan — BIC-DR-AR-100108-P01.
- Planning Proposal Statement, Version - 6 July 2026, including the submitted operational-management material.
- Submitted Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") Screening request and supporting report.
- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
- Utilities and Infrastructure Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Statement
- Preliminary Risk Assessment for Potential Unexploded Ordnance Contamination
- Noise Assessment.
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Design Statement.
- Geo-environmental and geotechnical assessment.
- Tree Survey and Tree Constraints Plan.
- Travel Plan, Site A, Bicester, Final Rev. 02, 5 June 2026.

The assessment also takes account of the EIA Screening Direction dated 26 August 2026.

Key evidence themes

The planning application details a phased layout for the proposal: Phase 1 for 408 Service Users, Phase 2 for a further 216 Service Users and Phase 3 for a further 632 Service Users, giving a full site capacity of 1,256 Service Users. The plans also show the supporting operational infrastructure required to make the site function, including healthcare, medical isolation, reception, security, staff facilities, generator compounds, cold water storage, hydrant tank, pumping station, phase-specific foul-drainage infrastructure and any approved interim arrangements, attenuation ponds, parking, cycle storage, and emergency access.

The broader technical evidence continues to show significant uncertainty in relation to flood risk, surface water and foul drainage, utilities capacity, power and water supply, buried services, contamination, made ground and hardstanding reuse. These issues remain relevant to equality because they affect health, hygiene, access, service continuity, emergency preparedness and route safety for future occupants, staff, and nearby communities.

The Officials' Report ("OR") which assess the planning merits of the planning proposal concludes that acceptable surface-water and foul-drainage solutions are achievable in

[redacted]

[redacted]

principle. The recommended conditions would require phase-specific approval, implementation and verification of the necessary arrangements before the relevant development or occupation.

The geo-environmental and geotechnical evidence identifies possible made ground, contamination risks, shallow asbestos risk, and differential settlement concerns in areas that may be reused for modular development. The arboriculture evidence confirms that tree and root protection constraints will influence layout choices. The UXO assessment concludes that the likelihood of encountering UXO within the area of interest is low but recommends site-specific explosive safety awareness training and an emergency response plan because of the site's military and ordnance history.

Assumptions and limitations

The HO does not publish comprehensive equality data against all the nine protected characteristics in a reportable format.

The starting point for our analysis is the HO published data relating to asylum seekers. However, given the data limitations, assumptions have been made to estimate the proportion of protected characteristics likely to be held by asylum seekers by cross referencing the HO data with other data sources.

Study Area

The Urgent Crown Development ("UCD") route would grant planning permission, subject to conditions, for development in the administrative area of Cherwell District Council. As such, data has been collected within a Local Impact Area ("LIA") consisting of the Lower-layer Super Output Area ("LSOA") Cherwell 016D. This area covers the immediate surroundings of the site and therefore represents the local community that could be affected should the proposed development be granted planning permission. It is noted that the site would not be a detained site, and asylum seekers would be able to leave it at any time. As residents would be free to leave the site, the assessment also considers potential effects beyond this LSOA, including where residents may access off-site services and community facilities.

Demographic Composition of Local Area

The Office for National Statistics ("ONS") 2024 mid-year estimates a population 1,607 people in the LIA. Of these, 20.1% are aged 0-19 years old, 61.2% are 20-64 years old and 18.5% 65+ years old. The Census 2021 data recorded that of the LIA's population, 86.1% are White, 4.7% Asian, 3.5% mixed or of multiple ethnic groups, 0.8% are from Other ethnic groups (such as Arab) and 4.9% Black. Census 2021 data indicate that 20.6% of the LIA's population were disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act, while 79.4% were not disabled under the Equality Act. The ONS 2024 mid-year estimates of the LIA's population, 45.2% are female and 54.8% male. Census 2021 data show that 44.6% of the LIA's population identified as Christian and 40.1% as having no religion, with smaller proportions identifying as Muslim (4.5%), Buddhist (1.2%), Hindu (0.3%), Jewish (0.2%), Sikh (0.1%) or another religion (1.9%). Census 2021 data show that 48.8% of the LIA's population had never married or entered a civil partnership, 35.4% were married or in a civil partnership, 8.6% were divorced, 3.3% separated and 3.9% widowed.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Demographic Composition of Asylum Seekers

Age and Sex

The demographic data of asylum seekers as a whole is not necessarily reflective of the demographic data of service users arriving at MOD Bicester; however, it is assumed that there will be some level of overlap, and the asylum seeker demographic data represents a reasonable estimate.

In the year to June 2026, there were a total of 85,891 asylum seeker applications 21% fewer than in the previous year. Of these, 60,883 were male (70.9%) and 24,997 were female (29.1%). There were 11 asylum seekers whose sex was unknown (0.01%). In terms of age, asylum seekers aged between 18 and 29 represented the largest group (47.6%), followed by those aged between 30 and 49 (30.6%) and then those under the age of 18 (18.1%). A detailed breakdown of the age and sex of asylum seekers is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sex by age profile of asylum seekers (Male/Female/Unknown) (Q3 2025 – Q2 2026).

Age	Female		Male		Unknown	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<18	5,801	23.2%	9,730	16%	2	18.2%
18-29	9,676	38.7%	31,212	51.3%	6	54.6%
30-49	8,165	32.7%	18,156	29.8%	2	18.2%
50-69	1,142	4.5%	1,627	2.7%	1	9.0%
70+	213	0.9%	158	0.2%	0	0.0%
Total	24,997	29.1%	60,883	70.9%	11	0.01%

Source: Home Office: Asylum– Claims and Initial Decisions (2026). Data Asy_D01

Age-band percentages are calculated within each sex category; percentages in the total row are calculated against the overall total. Figures may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

2.2 Assess the impact.

This section records the Department's assessment of the reasonably foreseeable equality effects of granting or refusing planning permission for the proposed development at MOD Bicester, for the purposes of informing the Secretary of State's decision and consideration of the matters identified in section 149 of the Act. It considers the effects of construction, phased occupation, operation and decommissioning on prospective occupants, workers and surrounding communities.

KEY EQUALITY ISSUES

[redacted]

[redacted]

Granting planning permission would enable accommodation for up to 1,256 Service Users and the supporting healthcare, welfare, communal and recreational facilities described in section 1.1. The principal equality considerations concern access to suitable accommodation and services; limited independent accessibility and reliance on managed transport; communal accommodation and phased delivery; construction and environmental effects; and safety, safeguarding and community cohesion. The assessment below considers the proposed mitigation, the extent to which it would be secured through the recommended conditions, and the disadvantages and uncertainties that would remain. Future approval, implementation and monitoring arrangements do not replace consideration of those foreseeable effects when determining the application.

Refusing planning permission would mean that the proposed development and its associated effects would not be authorised by this permission, but neither would its accommodation capacity and supporting facilities be delivered under it. The evidence considered in this assessment does not establish where prospective occupants would otherwise be accommodated or the comparative equality effects of those arrangements. Refusal should therefore not be assumed necessarily to produce better or worse outcomes for them. This assessment informs the decision whether to grant or refuse planning permission; it does not reassess the earlier decision about the length of the representation period.

Impacts during use of the proposed development

Accessibility, phasing, and essential services

The phased masterplans and supporting reports show growing occupancy alongside shared facilities such as healthcare, ablution, laundry, dining, recreation, and multi-faith provision. The principal equality question is whether these facilities remain accessible, safe, and dignified at each phase, and whether walking distances, route quality, lighting, gradients, and proximity to care create any particular disadvantage for those with protected characteristics. If permission is granted, mitigation would be secured through the recommended conditions in Annex K to the Officials' Report, including the site-wide phasing plan required by Condition 28 and the Operational Management, Safeguarding and Community Cohesion Plan required by Condition 17. These controls would coordinate the delivery of shared infrastructure and facilities and secure the relevant phase-specific services and safeguards before occupation, with implementation, maintenance and review thereafter as required by the conditions. The assessment of whether to grant permission takes account of those controls but does not assume that they would eliminate all accessibility and service-provision disadvantages; residual effects remain relevant to the Minister's decision.

Drainage, utilities, and resilience

Surface water flooding, foul drainage, utilities capacity and service resilience remain central issues. These matters are equality-relevant because disruption to drainage, power, water, sanitary provision, or healthcare access may fall more heavily on those with protected characteristics. The extent of works to existing utilities and drainage assets remains subject

[redacted]

[redacted]

to investigation and detailed design. Drainage assets would be retained, repaired, upgraded or replaced as demonstrated necessary, with the required drainage infrastructure and mitigation implemented before occupation of the relevant phase.

Ground conditions, contamination, and safe construction.

The evidence identifies possible made ground, contamination risks, shallow asbestos risk, differential settlement concerns and a low but residual UXO risk. These matters are relevant because unstable, uneven, or contaminated surfaces may place disabled people, older people and those with health vulnerabilities at particular disadvantage, while safe demolition, excavation and ground disturbance procedures form part of the wider health and safety framework on which future occupants, workers and nearby communities depend. The identified mitigation, including investigation, safe systems of work, awareness training and emergency procedures, would be secured, as applicable, through proposed Condition 6 (construction and asbestos-management controls), Conditions 11–14 (contamination assessment, remediation and verification) and Condition 16 (UXO risk mitigation), at the stages specified in those conditions. These controls would be complemented by the phase-specific operational facilities and safeguards secured through proposed Condition 17. Together, these measures are material to reducing the risk of disproportionate effects and inform the assessment of whether planning permission should be granted.

Movement, community effects, and layout constraints

Traffic, access design, emergency access, arboricultural constraints, powerline exclusion areas, and heritage railway features may all shape how people move through the site and how the site affects surrounding communities. These factors are equality-relevant because they influence safety, amenity, legibility, route length, and the practical delivery of inclusive space standards. Mitigation would be secured through the recommended Highway Safety and Access condition, including its phased implementation, monitoring and review requirements, together with the separate conditions governing managed Service User transport and the Travel Plan. The necessary access works and controls would be implemented before occupation of the relevant phase or first operational use of an access, whichever occurs first, and operated thereafter in accordance with the approved scheme. These measures would reduce the risk of avoidable disadvantage, but residual accessibility constraints remain relevant to the permission decision.

.

Human health

Whilst a Human Health Impact Assessment has not been submitted by the HO as part of the planning application, an assessment can be made from the information provided in the Planning Statement, Noise Assessment, and EIA screening.

If planning permission is granted, the provision and operation of phase-specific healthcare and welfare services would be secured through the Operational Management, Safeguarding and Community Cohesion Plan required by proposed Condition 17. The arrangements would require approval before occupation of each relevant phase, including

[redacted]

[redacted]

the scope, staffing, commissioning and operating hours of the on-site healthcare service, prescription and referral pathways, escalation and emergency arrangements, and an assessment of residual demand on off-site NHS services. The necessary services and safeguards would need to be operational before occupation and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved plan. These controls would support Service Users' wellbeing and reduce pressure on local healthcare provision but would not eliminate off-site demand or all potential healthcare access-related tensions. Those residual effects remain relevant to the Secretary of State's decision whether to grant planning permission.

More broadly, all asylum seekers are eligible for free National Health Service ("NHS") healthcare in the same way as UK citizens and other permanent residents. Onsite primary healthcare has the added benefit of reducing potential tension between the local community towards asylum seekers, who may otherwise perceive asylum seekers competing with, and thereby, reducing the availability and access to community-based General Practitioners ("GP") and primary healthcare provision. The detailed healthcare provision would be informed by engagement with the relevant local health bodies and would require approval through the Operational Management, Safeguarding and Community Cohesion Plan under proposed Condition 17, with the services required for each phase operational before occupation and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved plan.

Transport is also provided where necessary to enable access to health services which are not available on site. The nearest GP surgery to the Site is Unity Health Brill, on Thame Road, Brill, located c.4.5 km south of the Site. The next nearest is Langford Medical Practice on Nightingale Place, located c.4.9 km northwest of the Site. A representation received from NHS Thames Valley Integrated Care Board ("ICB") in September 2026 detailed four other nearby GP practices which currently do not have the clinical capacity to accommodate any new patients. NHS Thames Valley ICB concluded that the proposed development would adversely impact on the clinical capacity of local health care services.

The proposed on-site healthcare services would reduce but not eliminate, demand on off-site NHS services. Before occupation of each phase, its scope, staffing, commissioning arrangements, operating hours and referral pathways would require approval, together with an assessment of residual NHS demand. Any additional healthcare mitigation identified as necessary through the assessment of residual NHS demand would need to be incorporated into the plan approved under proposed Condition 17 and implemented before occupation of the relevant phase, insofar as required by that condition.

For the permission decision, the relevant consideration is whether adequate healthcare, safeguarding and emergency-response arrangements would support the proposed occupation of the site. These matters would be addressed through the plan required by proposed Condition 17, insofar as its requirements cover infectious-disease management, mental-health support, safeguarding referrals and emergency escalation. The assessment relies on the arrangements required by that condition being approved and operational before occupation of the relevant phase and maintained thereafter, while recognising that

[redacted]

residual risks and demand on off-site health and emergency services would remain relevant to the Secretary of State's decision.

ASSESSMENT OF REPRESENTATIONS MADE

Approximately 3,178 public representations have been submitted in response to the MOD Bicester application. A large majority of these representations include concerns related to protected characteristics of intended service users, particularly on sex, race, religion and marriage/civil partnership.

Sex

The most prominent concern found within at least 25% of representations, was in relation to sex. These representations expressed severe personal safety concerns for the local community, especially for women and children in the area, due to the site being a male only facility. Representations expressed a need for greater safeguarding in the area, if the site comes into operation.

Race and Religion

Representations also shared concerns surrounding personal safety regarding both race and religion of the intended asylum seekers. Specifically, representations expressed how the race and religion of service users can influence their behaviours and attitudes, which could put the personal safety of vulnerable groups (such as women, children and the elderly) at risk.

Representations also expressed concerns surrounding educating potential service users of UK cultural norms and how effectively this would be delivered to them, given their differences in language, race, religious beliefs and cultural nationalities.

Marriage/Civil Partnership – Single Status.

A further concern received from representations relates to the marital status of proposed service users. MOD Bicester is intended to accommodate single males only. Representations expressed personal safety and local crime concerns, surrounding the single status of men. Specifically, representations expressed concern that an increase in single men without family/children could lead to an increased risk for anti-social behaviour and crime in the area, as they may use local infrastructure differently to how a family would.

Consideration

The proposed planning permission would limit the maximum occupancy of the site but would not prescribe occupants' age, sex or marital or civil partnership status. If permission is granted, the Home Office intends to accommodate single adult males; this assessment therefore takes account of that reasonably foreseeable pattern of occupation and its associated equality effects. The allocation of individuals to the site would remain a separate operational decision for the Home Office, rather than a restriction imposed by the permission. References below to the intended occupant group should be understood on that basis.

[redacted]

In response to the above concerns shared by public representations, multiple precautionary steps have been proposed to address these concerns relating to personal safety, security and crime prevention. The HO are working with local police liaison and commanders, local councils, and a private sector security provider to seek to prevent anti-social behaviour, committed by asylum seekers or by members of the public, where and when it may occur. The HO is alert to, and will manage, such impacts in partnership with the Police, Local Authorities, elected representatives, and other stakeholders. Furthermore, a factsheet has been provided on the HO website, and further non-statutory engagement may be undertaken with local stakeholders to mitigate any impacts. The HO will also establish a Multi-Agency Forum ("MAF"), which will bring together, on a regular basis, statutory partners and other agencies. The ongoing interaction and shared resources between multiple stakeholders, is intended for strict monitoring and mitigation of anti-social behaviour and crime within the local community. It is intended these strategies will provide safeguarding reassurance to the community, including women and to those with children.

The HO have designed MOD Bicester to be a site which is as self-sufficient as possible, to minimise the impact on local communities and services. For example, onsite primary healthcare for physical and mental health and wellbeing, can limit potential tension between the local community and their direct interaction with vulnerable groups (such as the elderly) within healthcare spaces.

All those accommodated at the site will receive and must sign an occupancy agreement setting out unacceptable behaviour, including harassment, bullying and threatening behaviour, and the consequences of a persistent or substantial breach. Upon arrival, it is expected that each service user will receive a briefing and orientation about the site and the local community. More detail on the briefings can be found in the 'Community Relations' section of this PSED.

The proposed security, stakeholder liaison, induction and incident response arrangements would materially reduce, but would not eliminate, community safety and cohesion risks. These measures would be secured through the Operational Management, Safeguarding and Community Cohesion Plan before occupation of each relevant phase. Residual effects associated with the development's scale, location and operational demands would remain and require monitoring and response. The assessment does not assume that future occupants' protected characteristics indicate a propensity for antisocial behaviour and crime.

ASSESSMENT UNDER THE THREE LIMBS OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The impacts being considered are those relating to the use of, and development on, the relevant land and how those with protected characteristics may be affected. A relevant consideration is whether the facilities at the site will ensure a standard of living which is adequate for asylum seekers across each Protected Characteristic Group.

Limb 1: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

The assessment under this limb considers both differential treatment and whether apparently neutral features or arrangements could place people sharing a protected

[redacted]

characteristic at a particular disadvantage, as well as harassment and victimisation. Its conclusions take account of the identified mitigation, residual effects and evidence limitations; they do not assume that the absence of direct discrimination establishes the absence of other prohibited conduct.

Disability

Disability is a central equality issue for the scheme. Pedestrian route quality, drainage resilience, healthcare access, surface condition, sanitary provision, lighting, emergency egress, and service resilience all have the potential to place disabled people at disadvantage if they are not properly addressed.

Where the disability is less severe, it may be unsuitable (on an individual basis) for specific asylum seekers to be accommodated at this site given the site and accommodation are not adapted for those with particular accessibility needs. This could prevent service users making full use of the site's amenities and facilities.

There is an additional duty under the Act to make reasonable adjustments for asylum seekers placed at a substantial disadvantage because of disability when compared to a person who does not share their disability. The needs will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and reasonable adjustments will be made where such adjustments meet asylum seekers needs within the site's service provision for accommodation to be provided.

For the permission decision, the relevant consideration is whether the proposed accommodation, layout, routes, facilities and services would meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of disabled occupants, taking account of the mitigation secured through the recommended conditions. The assessment distinguishes the measures secured by proposed Condition 17 and other relevant conditions from the Home Office's separate screening, allocation and transfer arrangements. Those operational processes provide context but do not substitute for assessing the development's foreseeable effects or establish, by themselves, that disability-related disadvantage would be avoided. Any remaining accessibility limitations and the consequences for occupants whose needs could not be met remain relevant to the Secretary of State's decision whether to grant planning permission.

The assessment also considers whether apparently neutral features of the development, including shared facilities, walking distances and reliance on managed transport, could place disabled occupants at a particular disadvantage compared with non-disabled occupants. The accessibility and service-resilience risks identified above remain relevant after allowing for the proposed mitigation; separate screening, allocation and transfer arrangements do not establish that those disadvantages would be avoided.

Age

The proposed planning permission would not prescribe occupants' ages or restrict occupation to those aged 18–49. That age group forms the majority of asylum applicants in the demographic evidence, rather than a prescribed occupant group under the permission. The assessment nevertheless considers whether the development's accommodation,

[redacted]

[redacted]

layout, facilities and accessibility could disadvantage people of different ages, taking account of the reasonably foreseeable pattern of occupation.

Children (those under 18 years of age) are excluded from the site because Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children ("UASC") fall under the statutory responsibility of local authorities, and family groups are housed in dedicated family accommodation elsewhere. Statistical trends clearly demonstrate that those in the 18-49 age range consistently form the majority of asylum applicants. Older adults (50-69 and 70+) represent a very small minority of applicants and may have additional support, or accessibility needs not compatible with MOD Bicester's eventual design. Where an asylum seeker's age or age-related needs renders MOD Bicester unsuitable, they will be allocated to alternative accommodation within the HO estate.

- Section 13(2) of the Act provides that different treatment because of age does not constitute direct discrimination if the person applying that treatment can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Providing safe and appropriate accommodation suited to individuals' assessed needs may constitute such an aim, but does not, by itself, establish that any age-based difference in treatment is proportionate. The proposed permission would not impose an age restriction; any age-based allocation criteria would be a separate operational matter for the Home Office. The planning assessment nevertheless considers the development's foreseeable age-related disadvantages, the mitigation secured through the recommended conditions and any residual effects.

Religion or belief

The religious affiliations and observance needs of prospective occupants are not established by the evidence presented in this assessment. Provision should therefore accommodate a range of religions and beliefs, including those with no religion, without assuming individuals' beliefs from their nationality. All decisions to provide accommodation to an adult asylum seeker are made on an individual needs-basis, regardless of religion.

The proposed development includes on-site kitchen and dining facilities. Their provision and availability are relevant to the permission decision because occupants would rely on them, given the site's limited independent accessibility. Detailed arrangements for meeting dietary, cultural and religious needs would remain an operational responsibility of the Home Office and service provider, except insofar as expressly secured through proposed Condition 17. The proposed development includes on-site multi-faith facilities, as described in section 1.1. Their provision could support occupants' religious observance and reduce reliance on off-site facilities. Detailed access and management arrangements would remain operational matters except insofar as expressly secured through the approved documents and recommended conditions. As the site is non-detained, however asylum seekers will also be able to freely access local places of worship and practise their religion or belief if needed.
The proposed multi-faith facilities form part of the development for which permission is sought and could help meet occupants' differing religious and observance needs. The different denominations within Christianity and Islam, it is recognised, could cause tensions.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Steps to manage any tensions will be taken in line with existing policy and operational practice across the site.
The proposed catering and multi-faith facilities would help meet differing religious needs. However, shared provision and reliance on transport for off-site worship could place some occupants at a particular disadvantage. The assessment therefore takes account of those potential effects, the mitigation secured by the recommended conditions and any residual limitations, rather than relying solely on the absence of different treatment in allocation decisions.

Sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, and sexual orientation

Sex

Decisions to provide accommodation to asylum seekers are made on a needs basis, regardless of sex. It is likely that MOD Bicester will accommodate single, adult males only – which potentially constitutes less favourable treatment for those accommodated at, or excluded from, the site. The proposed permission would not restrict occupation by sex. The Home Office's intention to accommodate single adult males is a separate operational decision but informs the reasonably foreseeable pattern of occupation considered in this assessment.
The Home Office's intended allocation of single adult males is an operational policy, separate from the proposed permission, which would not restrict occupation by sex. This assessment does not determine the lawfulness or proportionality of that allocation policy. It considers the reasonably foreseeable effects of the development's shared accommodation, facilities, accessibility and operational demands on occupants and surrounding communities.
The permission decision takes account of the relevant healthcare, safeguarding, security and community-cohesion measures secured through proposed Condition 17, insofar as required by that condition. Those controls would reduce, but would not eliminate, the identified risks and disadvantages; separate allocation policies and alternative accommodation arrangements are not mitigation secured by this permission.

Pregnancy and maternity

The intended pattern of occupation does not include pregnant occupants or families with children, but it is not a restriction imposed by the proposed permission. It does not remove the need to consider foreseeable effects on workers, visitors and surrounding communities, including access, safety and local healthcare demand. The assessment takes account of those effects and the relevant mitigation rather than treating pregnancy and maternity as outside its scope.

Sexual Orientation

The assessment considers the potential for shared accommodation and communal facilities to expose some occupants to particular disadvantage, harassment or bullying. Separate allocation and transfer procedures do not establish that those effects would be avoided.
The permission decision must take account of the relevant safeguarding measures secured by the recommended conditions and the residual risks, rather than rely on a conclusion limited to direct discrimination.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Gender reassignment

Individual allocation and transfer decisions concerning gender reassignment would remain operational matters for the Home Office, separate from the permission decision. The relevant planning consideration is whether the proposed shared accommodation and communal facilities could expose occupants to particular disadvantage, harassment or hostile or abusive behaviour, and the extent to which the development's design and safeguards would address those effects.

The shared accommodation and facilities may create particular disadvantages and safeguarding risks for occupants with this protected characteristic. Individual allocation and transfer arrangements provide operational context but do not establish that such effects would be avoided. The permission decision therefore takes account of the relevant safeguarding measures secured by the recommended conditions, together with residual risks of hostile or abusive behaviour.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

The proposed permission would not prescribe occupants' marital or civil partnership status. The Home Office's intended allocation arrangements would, however, mean that couples claiming asylum together would be accommodated elsewhere. This is a separate operational decision, not a restriction imposed by the permission. The assessment does not infer from allocation policies alone that the development would give rise to no disadvantage associated with marriage or civil partnership.

Where it is subsequently identified that a married or civil partner of an asylum seeker accommodated at this site has also claimed asylum in the UK then, via the Change of Circumstances process, it will be possible to arrange for both partners to be accommodated together elsewhere in the asylum estate appropriate to their needs, provided both wish to be accommodated together. This separate operational process does not, by itself, establish that all potential disadvantages would be avoided in implementing the proposed development.

Race

The proposed permission would not prescribe occupants' race, ethnic origin or nationality. Nevertheless, the reasonably foreseeable use as asylum accommodation means that its benefits and disadvantages could fall disproportionately on particular racial, ethnic or national groups. The assessment therefore considers whether apparently neutral features—including communal accommodation, limited independent accessibility, reliance on managed transport and arrangements for accessing information and services—could place people sharing those characteristics at a particular disadvantage compared with people who do not. Relevant potential disadvantages include language and communication barriers, difficulties accessing services and exposure to racial harassment or hostility. Translation, induction, transport, safeguarding and community-cohesion measures could reduce those effects, but reliance is placed on them as mitigation secured by the permission only insofar as required by the recommended conditions, including proposed Condition 15. Residual disadvantages remain relevant to the Secretary of State's decision; allocation regardless of race does not establish their absence.

Safety and security of residents

[redacted]

[redacted]

In the year ending March 2025, there were 123,957 hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales (excluding the Metropolitan Police Service ("MPS")), a 7% increase compared with the previous year (116,000 offences). There were 90,378 race hate crimes, an increase of 10% from the previous year; religious hate crimes increased by 15% to 8,214 offences; sexual orientation hate crimes fell by 1%, to 18,520 offences, while transgender hate crimes decreased by 4%, to 3,643 offences. As in previous years, the majority of hate crimes were racially motivated, accounting for about 73% of all such offences. For some asylum seekers, hate crime can be intersectional in nature in that the victims may be, for example, black, Muslim, and LGBT+.

The British Red Cross is amongst the organisations that has raised safety concerns as asylum seekers in hotels have been targeted in hate crime attacks by far-right groups. In his report into contingency asylum accommodation, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (May 2022) explained that Inspectors had visited several sites where far-right activity had been reported (particularly when sites were first 'stood up'). The report referred to the responsibility, when allocating accommodation, to consider the appropriateness of the location with regards to the absence of any reported social tension incidents at the time of allocation, and the level of risk of increased social tension if service user numbers increase within the relevant area. The report also referred to the need for the Home Office to liaise with the local police force or other interested stakeholders to understand whether accommodating asylum seekers there will cause any issues with the local community.

If planning permission is granted, security management, safeguarding and community-cohesion arrangements would be addressed through the Operational Management, Safeguarding and Community Cohesion Plan required by proposed Condition 17. The relevant arrangements would require approval and implementation before occupation of each phase, and maintenance thereafter, in accordance with the condition. The Home Office's proposed security staffing and CCTV arrangements provide supporting context but are not treated as fixed requirements of the permission unless expressly secured. These controls would reduce, but would not eliminate, risks to occupants and neighbouring communities; residual safety and safeguarding effects remain relevant to the Secretary of State's decision.

Further, within the Planning Proposal Statement of the application there is an Operational Management Plan that outlines measures to ensure the security of the site residents including protester management, fire risk management and incident management.

Limb 2: Advance equality of opportunity

The relevant consideration under this limb is whether the development would minimise disadvantages connected to protected characteristics, meet differing needs and support

[redacted]

[redacted]

participation. Home Office allocation, transfer and support policies are separate operational matters and are not treated as benefits secured by the proposed permission.
If permission is granted and implemented, the proposed healthcare, welfare, communal, recreational and multi-faith facilities could help meet differing needs and improve access to on-site services. However, limited independent accessibility, reliance on managed transport and shared accommodation could create or perpetuate barriers, particularly for disabled occupants and others with specific access or support needs. The assessment takes account of the facilities and mitigation secured through the approved development and recommended conditions, while recognising that these would not eliminate all disadvantages. The evidence does not establish an overall improvement in equality of opportunity compared with the accommodation that prospective occupants would otherwise receive.
Refusal would prevent these site-specific benefits and disadvantages from arising under this permission. As the evidence does not establish the alternative accommodation arrangements or their comparative effects, it does not support a conclusion that refusal would necessarily improve or worsen equality of opportunity. On the available evidence, no overall improvement or deterioration in equality of opportunity can reliably be established for either outcome.

Limb 3: Foster good relations

Stakeholder engagement

If permission is granted and implemented, the development could affect relations between occupants and surrounding communities, including between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. Stakeholder liaison and community-cohesion measures could help address prejudice and promote understanding but would not eliminate the risk of tension. The assessment relies on those measures as mitigation secured by the permission only insofar as required by proposed Condition 17. Refusal would prevent the development's site-specific effects from arising under this permission, but the evidence does not establish that it would necessarily improve relations between the relevant groups.

Community relations

The induction, occupancy-agreement, partnership-working and engagement arrangements described below are the Home Office's proposed operational arrangements. They inform the assessment of the likely effects of implementing the development but are relied upon as mitigation secured by the permission only insofar as expressly required by the recommended conditions, including Condition 17. Separate Home Office policies and commitments are not conditions of the planning permission, and the assessment does not assume that they would eliminate the identified disadvantages or risks.

Upon arrival at the site, it is expected that each asylum seeker will receive a briefing and orientation about the site and the local community. The induction briefing explains what:

- constitutes appropriate behaviour and expectations,
- are acceptable and unacceptable/anti-social behaviours,

[redacted]

[redacted]

- their responsibilities, as individuals, are to act in a considerate and respectful way and be a good neighbour when on or off site.

All asylum seekers will also receive and must sign a written Occupancy Agreement. MOD Bicester will not be a detained site, and asylum seekers are able to leave it at any time. If they choose to, asylum seekers will be free to interact with the local community and pass close to local amenities nearby. Managed transport for necessary off-site journeys would be secured before occupation of each relevant phase through the Operational Management, Safeguarding and Community Cohesion Plan. The plan would confirm routes, destinations, capacity, frequency and operating hours, together with monitoring and review arrangements. The Home Office and Service Provider may engage with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations about the provision of organised activities for service users.

The proposed development includes dedicated multi-faith facilities, which could support religious observance and reduce some demand for off-site facilities. Their detailed availability and management would remain operational matters unless expressly secured through the approved documents or recommended conditions; this assessment does not assume that 24-hour access is secured. On-site provision would not remove all need or desire to access off-site worship or community facilities. The site may generate anxiety amongst local residents, for instance, relating to social cohesion and fear of crime. To help mitigate anxieties and potential negative perceptions, non-statutory engagement may be undertaken. A factsheet has been published on the HO website, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-accommodation-at-military-sites-factsheets/mod-bicester-site-a-oxfordshire-factsheet, and the HO proposes proportionate engagement with local stakeholders, including through Multi-Agency Forums. The HO is committed to engaging with local and national health providers over the provision of health services associated with the site to help reduce demand on existing local services. Proposed on-site welfare support activities and services are intended to promote service users' physical and mental wellbeing. These arrangements could reduce healthcare access-related tensions but would not eliminate off-site demand or community-cohesion risks. They are relied upon as secured mitigation only to the extent required by the recommended conditions, including Condition 17. The HO acknowledges that the use of the site in an area which may not previously have accommodated large numbers of single adult male asylum seekers may have an actual or perceived impact on community relations.

The HO is alert to, and will manage, such impacts in partnership with the Police, Local Authorities, elected representatives, and other stakeholders. Drawing on practice for other sites, the HO will establish a Multi-Agency Forum which will bring together, on a regular basis, statutory and other agencies. Through engaging and working with local police liaison and commanders, local councils and a private sector security provider, the HO will seek to prevent anti-social behaviour as well as address it if it occurs.

Local services

In relation to accommodating asylum seekers at this site, the HO has considered the impact on the community, including "blue light" services. The equality impacts on the community

[redacted]

[redacted]

continue to be re-assessed for the duration that the site is operational. All asylum seekers are eligible for free NHS healthcare in the same way as UK citizens and other permanent residents. On-site primary healthcare would support residents' health and wellbeing and reduce, but not eliminate, demand on local services. Its effectiveness depends on the service being fitted out, staffed, commissioned and operational before occupation, and maintained while the relevant phase is occupied. Onsite primary healthcare has the added benefit of reducing potential tension between the local community towards asylum seekers, who may otherwise perceive asylum seekers competing with, and thereby, reducing the availability and access to community-based GPs and primary healthcare provision.

Protests

If permission is granted and implemented, the use of the site as asylum accommodation could become a focus for protest. Peaceful protest is not, in itself, evidence of prejudice or poor relations between protected groups. However, if opposition involved hostility towards occupants because of their actual or perceived race, nationality or religion, it could reinforce prejudice and damage relations between people sharing those characteristics and those who do not. Neither occupants' characteristics nor those of protesters should be assumed from their asylum status or participation in protest.

The permission assessment therefore considers the potential for such effects and the liaison, incident-response and community-cohesion measures secured through proposed Condition 17, insofar as expressly required by that condition. Those measures could help address prejudice and promote understanding but would not eliminate all risks. Refusal would prevent the proposed use and its associated site-specific effects from arising under this permission; it would not establish that underlying prejudice or wider tensions would diminish, or that relations between relevant groups would necessarily improve.

Transport

The site has limited independent accessibility and lacks continuous safe pedestrian and cycle connections to nearby services. Managed transport would moderate, but not remove, those shortcomings and would be operational before occupation of each relevant phase. Its adequacy would be monitored and reviewed with the local highway authority and other relevant stakeholders during operation.

Safety and security

There have been numerous media reports of protest and disturbance at hotels used by asylum seekers as they could be a target for hate crimes. If planning permission is granted, detailed security arrangements would be subject to approval through the Operational Management, Safeguarding and Community Cohesion Plan required by proposed Condition 17, with implementation and maintenance in accordance with that condition. The assessment relies on the security measures expressly secured through those requirements, rather than assuming that 24/7 staffing or particular access controls are fixed requirements of the permission. Such measures could reduce the risk of unauthorised access and hostile incidents affecting occupants but would not eliminate those risks; residual safety and community-cohesion effects remain relevant to the Secretary of State's decision.

[redacted]

[redacted]

The site is not located in a high crime area. There are strong local concerns about the use of the site, which have given rise to protests, including a referendum from the local village of Piddington, where residents have voted to become independent from the UK in protest at the proposed development. The police have attended when required to address security incidents and the HO are working with local police liaison and commanders, local councils, and a private sector security provider to seek to prevent anti-social behaviour, committed by asylum seekers or by members of the public, where and when it may occur. The HO recognise that the nature of the site may place additional demands on the police forces concerned, which may justify additional funding, and has established a policy and process to handle such requests. Drawing on practice for other sites, the HO will establish a Multi-Agency Forum, which will bring together, on a regular basis, statutory partners and other agencies. Protests would be managed through the Operational Management, Safeguarding and Community Cohesion Plan required by condition. The plan would require approval before occupation of each relevant phase, with the security and other mitigation necessary to serve that phase operational before occupation and maintained thereafter.

The site may also generate anxiety amongst local residents, for instance, relating to social cohesion and fear of crime. A factsheet has been provided on the HO website, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-accommodation-at-military-sites-factsheets/mod-bicester-site-a-oxfordshire-factsheet, and further non-statutory engagement may be undertaken with local stakeholders to mitigate any impacts.

A further risk is that of antisocial or criminal behaviour by, and between, asylum seekers on the site. All those accommodated at the site will receive and must sign an occupancy agreement setting out unacceptable behaviour, including harassment, bullying and threatening behaviour, and the consequences of a persistent or substantial breach. Upon arrival, it is expected that each service user will receive a briefing and orientation about the site and the local community. The briefing will explain what:

- Constitutes appropriate behaviour and expectations
- Are acceptable and unacceptable/anti-social behaviours
- Their responsibilities, as individuals, are to act in a considerate and respectful way, and be a good neighbour when on, or off, site.

The Home Office describes disciplinary procedures for breaches of occupancy agreements, including possible termination following grievous misconduct or repeated warnings. These procedures and proposed security patrols could reduce antisocial behaviour and violence, but do not establish that occupants vulnerable to harassment or abuse would be unlikely to be affected. The permission assessment relies on safeguarding, security and incident-response measures as secured mitigation only insofar as expressly required by the recommended conditions, including Condition 17. Residual risks to occupants and their implications for community cohesion remain relevant to the Secretary of State's decision whether to grant or refuse permission.

- In summary, MHCLG's equality assessment in section 2.2 identifies potential disadvantages associated with accessibility, service provision and community cohesion. The mitigation secured through the recommended conditions would reduce, but would not

eliminate, those effects. This assessment takes account of the conditions' requirements for phase-specific approval, implementation before occupation, and maintenance and review thereafter, insofar as expressly required. Residual effects and evidence limitations remain relevant to the Secretary of State's decision whether to grant or refuse planning permission.

2.3 Summary of the Analysis

Context

MHCLG Officials consider that the site at MOD Bicester can accommodate the proposed development subject to the resolution of the technical matters and safeguards identified in sections 1.1, 2.1 and 2.2, in accordance with the approval and implementation requirements of the recommended conditions.

This analysis informs the Secretary of State's decision whether to grant planning permission for the temporary material change of use and associated operational development described in section 1.1. It considers the reasonably foreseeable effects of implementing that permission on future occupants, workers and surrounding communities. The Home Office's accommodation allocation and management arrangements are relevant insofar as they inform those effects, but are distinct from the planning decision.

Granting planning permission would enable accommodation for up to 1,256 service users, together with the supporting healthcare, welfare, communal and recreational facilities described in section 1.1. Those facilities have the potential to support occupants' wellbeing and access to services. However, section 2.2 identifies potential disadvantages associated with limited independent accessibility, communal accommodation, phased delivery, reliance on managed transport and on-site services, and the effects on local healthcare provision and community cohesion. Construction, ground conditions, drainage and utilities resilience also require safeguards for occupants, workers and neighbouring communities.

The assessment relies on the recommended conditions securing the relevant phase-specific approvals and mitigation at the stages specified, including implementation of the facilities, services and safeguards required before occupation and their maintenance thereafter. Home Office commitments to engagement, individual suitability assessments and alternative accommodation are relevant operational safeguards, but do not replace the assessment of the development's foreseeable effects or the measures necessary to make it acceptable in planning terms.

The proposed mitigation would reduce, but would not eliminate, the identified disadvantages. Managed transport would not remove the site's limited independent accessibility; on-site healthcare would not eliminate demand on off-site NHS services; and security, safeguarding and liaison arrangements would not remove all risks of harassment or community tension. These residual effects, and the evidence limitations identified in section 2.1, must therefore inform the decision whether to grant or refuse permission.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Refusal would mean that this permission would not authorise the proposed development and its associated effects. The proposed accommodation capacity and supporting facilities would also not be delivered under this permission. The evidence considered in this assessment does not establish where prospective occupants would otherwise be accommodated or the comparative effects of that accommodation. Refusal should therefore not be assumed necessarily to produce better or worse outcomes for them.

SECTION 3

3.1 Decision Making

The duty is personal to the Secretary of State as decision-maker and cannot be delegated to officials. This report assists the Secretary of State's consideration but does not discharge the duty on their behalf.

The PSED is a statutory duty binding the Secretary of State when determining this application, not a planning policy against which the development is assessed. It is a duty of process, not a requirement to achieve a particular outcome: compliance does not require a finding that granting or refusing permission would have a positive impact under each of the three statutory aims. This analysis identifies the reasonably foreseeable equality effects of granting or refusing permission, including potential benefits, disadvantages, residual effects and evidence limitations, to enable the Secretary of State to have due regard to the three statutory aims before reaching a decision. The recommended conditions are relevant to understanding the effects of granting permission, but mitigation does not itself establish compliance with the duty. Nor does the PSED require all adverse equality effects to be eliminated or dictate whether permission must be granted or refused.

GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION:

If planning permission is granted, the Secretary of State should do so recognising both the potential benefits of the accommodation and supporting facilities and the adverse and residual effects identified in sections 2.2 and 2.3. The assessment of grant relies on the recommended conditions securing the necessary phase-specific approvals and mitigation at the specified stages, with relevant safeguards operational before occupation and maintained thereafter. Those measures would reduce, but would not eliminate, the identified accessibility, local-service and community-cohesion effects. These effects must be considered in determining the application; the Home Office's continuing operational responsibilities are not a substitute for that consideration.

REFUSAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION.

If planning permission is refused, the proposed development and its associated effects would not be authorised by this permission, but neither would the proposed accommodation capacity and supporting facilities be delivered under it. Refusal would not remove the underlying need for asylum accommodation. As the evidence does not establish the alternative accommodation

[redacted]

[redacted]

arrangements or their comparative effects, no definitive conclusion can be drawn that refusal would result in better or worse outcomes for prospective occupants. The Secretary of State should consider these limitations alongside the site-specific effects identified in this assessment when determining the application.

3.2 Monitoring arrangements

It is understood that the responsibility of the operational management of the site would fall to the HO. The site will be a non-detained facility, and the HO will be responsible for ensuring ongoing monitoring arrangements with the Muti-Agency forum. This will include facilitating the relevant audits and inspection of the quality of services at the site.

If permission is granted, subsequent decisions on details submitted to discharge conditions would also require the determining authority to have due regard to the applicable statutory aims under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Within the scope of each condition, consideration should be given to how the submitted details would affect occupants, workers and surrounding communities, taking account of differing needs, potential disadvantages and updated evidence. This would be particularly relevant to the phase-specific arrangements under Condition 17 and the phasing plan under Condition 28, alongside other conditions affecting accessibility, transport, healthcare, drainage and service resilience.
The consideration of those applications should record the relevant equality effects, the safeguards secured by the submitted details and any residual disadvantages or uncertainties. Operational monitoring and review should inform subsequent decisions where relevant. Neither future discharge decisions nor monitoring arrangements replace the Secretary of State's duty to consider the reasonably foreseeable equality effects of granting or refusing permission at this stage.
The HO and site operator would implement the monitoring, reporting and review requirements secured through the approved strategies and management plans, and provide records as required by the conditions. Any separate inspection and enforcement arrangements should identify the responsible bodies and applicable powers.

[redacted]