Email 03 of 35

Bicester Garrison Site A – concerns regarding scale, suitability and precedent

Source file	Bicester Garrison Site A concerns regarding scale suitability and precedent.msg
From	[redacted]
To	matthew.pennycook.mp@parliament.uk; Ministerial Correspondence

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Dear Mr Pennycook,

I am writing regarding the proposal to accommodate up to 1,250 single adult male asylum seekers at Bicester Garrison Site A, close to Piddington and the surrounding villages.

I want to be clear that I do not live in Piddington, and I do not pretend to speak on behalf of its residents. I am writing because I come from a small town myself, and I believe what is happening in Piddington raises an issue that extends far beyond one Oxfordshire village.

I am deeply concerned about both the scale of this proposal and how little meaningful power the communities affected by it appear to have.

The issue for me is not whether people seeking asylum require accommodation; of course they do. It is whether concentrating up to 1,250 single adults at one site beside very small rural communities is proportionate or appropriate. These communities and their public services were never designed to accommodate a sudden population increase of this magnitude.

I am particularly concerned that there does not appear to be a confirmed commitment to provide additional police resources. Onsite private security and CCTV are not a substitute for adequately resourcing the police responsible for Piddington, Arncott, Bicester and the surrounding area. If the Government intends to introduce a population of this size, I think it is reasonable to expect it to explain clearly how the additional demands on policing, healthcare, transport and other local services will be met and funded.

I am also concerned about how long the Government intends to use the site for this purpose. If this is being described as temporary accommodation, what does “temporary” actually mean? Is there a defined end date, and what safeguards would prevent the site’s use being repeatedly extended? Residents should know before the site opens whether they are being asked to live alongside this development for months, years or potentially much longer.

More fundamentally, I find it deeply unfair that a village as small as Piddington can object so strongly to something capable of having such a significant impact on its surroundings and yet appear to have so little power over the ultimate decision.

I understand that national government sometimes has to make decisions that will not have universal local support. But surely the scale of a proposal relative to the community expected to live alongside it must matter. There is an enormous difference between accommodating a proportionate number of people within an established town with the infrastructure to support them and placing a facility for up to 1,250 people beside villages whose populations are only a fraction of that number.

Small towns and villages should not become convenient locations for large scale accommodation sites simply because government owned land happens to be available nearby. The people who have built their lives and homes in these communities deserve a meaningful voice in decisions capable of changing them.

That is why I care about Piddington despite not living there. If a development of this scale can be imposed on this community, I worry about the precedent it creates for small towns and villages throughout the country. I would like to understand what safeguards exist to prevent this becoming a model that is repeated elsewhere, and what genuine weight local opposition is given when the proposed development is so disproportionate to the size of the surrounding

community.

I appreciate that the Government has a difficult responsibility to provide asylum accommodation and reduce reliance on hotels. But solving that problem should not mean transferring a disproportionate and potentially long term burden onto some of the country's smallest communities.

I hope you will consider not only whether Site A is technically capable of accommodating 1,250 people, but whether placing a facility of this scale in this location is fair, proportionate and right.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]