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From: [redacted]
[redacted] September 2026 18:39
To: Crown Casework
Cc: calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk; wpwsobjection@gmail.com
Subject: FORMAL OBJECTION – MOD BICESTER SITE A (PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843)

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FORMAL OBJECTION – MOD BICESTER SITE A

Planning reference: PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing as a local resident to object to the proposal to accommodate up to **1,256 single adult male asylum seekers** at the former MOD site at Bicester Garrison.

I appreciate that the Government has a responsibility to provide accommodation for people seeking asylum. My objection is not to the individuals themselves, but to the **scale, location and suitability of this particular proposal**, and whether the necessary infrastructure and services can realistically support a development of this size.

The scale is enormous compared with the surrounding communities

The proposed population of 1,256 people is extraordinary in the context of the surrounding villages.

The 2021 Census records approximately:

- **Piddington – 358 residents**
- **Blackthorn – 605 residents**
- **Marsh Gibbon – 987 residents**
- **Arncott – 1,659 residents**

The proposed accommodation would therefore represent:

- **3½ times the population of Piddington**
- **More than twice the population of Blackthorn**
- **Around 27% larger than the population of Marsh Gibbon**
- **Approximately three-quarters of the population of Arncott**

This is therefore not a modest development. It is effectively the creation of a **new population centre larger than several established surrounding communities**, yet in a location which currently does not have the infrastructure or services normally associated with a settlement of this size.

The location and transport arrangements are a concern

The Government's own Transport Assessment acknowledges that the site is in a rural location with **limited pedestrian infrastructure and few local amenities**.

In particular, it states that:

- There are **no other facilities within a 2km walking distance** of the site.
- The site has **limited pedestrian and cycle accessibility**.
- Walking is **not recommended for local trips**.
- Home Office minibuses will therefore be needed to transport residents to external facilities and for necessary trips.
- The northern site access has **no footway**, while the southern access has only limited pedestrian provision.

That seems to me to be a fundamental problem rather than a minor inconvenience. A development accommodating 1,256 people should not be dependent on organised transport simply to access ordinary local facilities.

The fact that a junction may technically have spare vehicle capacity does not, in my view, answer the wider question of whether this is an appropriate location for such a large population.

There are still significant infrastructure questions

The technical assessments themselves identify a number of matters which require further investigation.

The Utilities and Infrastructure Assessment identifies uncertainty over the capacity and condition of existing infrastructure, including:

- **Water supply capacity**
- **Electricity capacity and configuration**
- **Surface-water drainage**
- **Existing drainage outfalls and connectivity**
- **The condition and capacity of existing drainage infrastructure**

The assessment states that existing electrical infrastructure **cannot currently be relied upon** and that temporary and/or permanent generators may be required.

It also identifies evidence of **ponding, blocked drainage assets and surface defects**, with further surveys required to establish the capacity and condition of the existing drainage arrangements.

The Planning Proposal Statement additionally identifies that approximately **25% of the site has a high chance of surface-water flooding.**

For a development of this scale, these should not be matters to resolve after the principle of the development has effectively been accepted.

The experience at Wethersfield should be taken seriously

There is also a particularly relevant precedent.

RAF Wethersfield is being used for large-scale asylum accommodation, with capacity now increased to **1,245 places**— almost exactly the proposed capacity at Bicester.

The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee examined the experience of large asylum sites and reported concerns about Wethersfield, including its isolation and the capacity of local services.

It also noted that a British Red Cross assessment commissioned by the Home Office concluded that large-site accommodation was not safe or appropriate and identified a high risk of suicide at Wethersfield.

The Committee subsequently identified the need for:

- **Strong partnerships with local services**
- **Adequate on-site services**
- **Effective Home Office oversight**
- **Clear operational arrangements**
- **Proper performance management of providers**

In 2026 the Home Affairs Committee reported that the Government did not yet have a performance framework in place to hold providers to account for large asylum accommodation sites, including Wethersfield and the proposed Bicester site.

Given this experience, I think it is reasonable for local residents to ask what specific lessons learned have been incorporated into the Bicester proposal and what guarantees are in place to prevent the same problems occurring here.

Ten years is not a genuinely short-term arrangement

The application describes the proposal as temporary for ten years. However, the supporting documents indicate that the facilities are being designed to operate for **longer if required**.

Recent experience at Wethersfield also demonstrates why local residents should be cautious about relying on the word “temporary”. Its use has already been extended.

A ten-year development capable of housing 1,256 people should therefore be assessed on the basis of its **realistic long-term impact**, rather than treated as a short-lived emergency measure.

Conclusion

I respectfully ask that the application be refused.

The combination of:

- **The exceptional scale of the proposed population**
- **The rural and relatively isolated location**
- **Very limited pedestrian and cycle connectivity**
- **The reliance on shuttle transport**
- **Unresolved infrastructure capacity and drainage questions**
- **Surface-water flooding concerns**
- **Environmental considerations**
- **The lessons from previous large asylum sites such as Wethersfield**

makes this an unsuitable location for development of this magnitude.

If the Secretary of State considers large-scale accommodation necessary, it should demonstrate that the proposed site is genuinely capable of supporting it without placing disproportionate pressure on **local roads, emergency services, healthcare, policing, utilities and neighbouring communities**.

I strongly object to the proposal.

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