[redacted]

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the proposal to use the MOD site at Piddington to accommodate approximately 1,250 migrants.

My objection is not based on the nationality, ethnicity or immigration status of the individuals who may ultimately be accommodated at the site. Rather, it concerns the exceptional scale of the proposed accommodation in relation to the existing size, infrastructure, facilities and capacity of Piddington and the surrounding rural communities.

1. Disproportionate scale

Piddington is a very small rural community with approximately 315 residents. The proposed accommodation of approximately 1,250 additional people would therefore represent an increase equivalent to almost four times the existing population.

The resulting population would be approximately 1,565 people, meaning that the existing community would be required to absorb a population almost five times its current size.

This is not a modest increase in population. It represents a fundamental change to the scale and character of the settlement and surrounding area.

It is therefore essential that the suitability of the proposal is considered in terms of its proportionality and impact upon the existing community and local infrastructure, rather than simply whether the physical MOD buildings are capable of containing the proposed number of people.

2. Lack of local facilities

Piddington does not have the facilities that would ordinarily be expected to support a population of this size.

There is no village shop, no public house or comparable local facility providing residents with everyday access to basic goods and services.

Consequently, a substantial number of the proposed residents would inevitably need to travel outside Piddington for basic necessities, healthcare, shopping, recreation and other services.

This raises significant questions regarding:

• the availability and capacity of public transport;

• traffic generation;

• pedestrian safety;

• access to healthcare;

• pressure upon neighbouring communities and their facilities;

• access to shops and essential services;

• the capacity of local public services; and

• the ability of the surrounding area to accommodate such a substantial additional population.

The proposal should therefore not be assessed solely on the basis of the site itself. Its impact upon neighbouring villages and the wider local area must also be properly considered.

3. Absence of pavements and pedestrian infrastructure

One of the most significant concerns is the lack of adequate pedestrian infrastructure within the village and surrounding roads.

Piddington is a rural settlement and does not have a comprehensive network of pavements capable of accommodating large numbers of pedestrians.

If 1,250 additional residents are placed at the site, there will inevitably be substantially more pedestrian movement between the site, public transport, neighbouring settlements and local facilities.

This creates legitimate concerns regarding highway and pedestrian safety, particularly where people are required to walk alongside rural roads without pavements.

A detailed and independent assessment should therefore establish:

• anticipated pedestrian movements;

• the routes likely to be used;

• the adequacy of existing footways;

• road crossing requirements;

• traffic speeds;

• visibility;

• accident risks;

• public transport access; and

• whether additional pedestrian infrastructure is required.

4. Inadequate street lighting

There is a further concern regarding street lighting, particularly where lighting is switched off overnight.

The combination of a large additional population, rural roads, limited pedestrian infrastructure and inadequate overnight lighting creates a legitimate road and pedestrian safety concern.

It would be unreasonable to expect significant numbers of people to walk through an unlit rural environment without first establishing that the routes are safe and suitable.

The relevant authorities should therefore provide evidence of a specific night-time pedestrian and highway safety assessment undertaken in light of the proposed accommodation.

5. Pressure upon healthcare and public services

An additional population of approximately 1,250 people would inevitably create additional demand for local services.

Questions must therefore be answered regarding the capacity of:

- GP surgeries;
- dentists;
- pharmacies;
- hospitals;
- ambulance services;
- mental health and welfare services;
- police;
- fire and rescue services; and
- other relevant public services.

It should not simply be assumed that existing services have sufficient capacity.

The proposal should be accompanied by clear evidence that the relevant service providers have been consulted and that the additional demand has been assessed and appropriately resourced.

6. Emergency services and access

The rural nature of Piddington also raises concerns about emergency access.

The authorities should demonstrate that the increased population can be adequately served by emergency services and that there are appropriate arrangements for:

• emergency vehicle access;

• evacuation;

• fire safety;

• medical emergencies;

• policing;

• safeguarding; and

• emergency communications.

The potential increase in demand should be assessed against the existing capacity of the relevant services rather than considered in isolation.

7. Impact on neighbouring communities

Because Piddington has very limited local facilities, many of the proposed residents will necessarily use facilities in neighbouring communities.

The proposal could therefore place additional pressure on nearby:

• shops;

• supermarkets;

• GP surgeries;

• dentists;

• pharmacies;

• bus services;

• railway stations;

• roads;

• public spaces; and

• emergency services.

It is therefore important that the assessment considers the cumulative impact across the wider area, rather than restricting consideration to the physical boundary of the MOD site.

8. Community cohesion and the character of the village

The introduction of a population almost four times the size of the existing community cannot reasonably be regarded as having no effect upon the character and functioning of the village.

Piddington has developed as a small rural community. Introducing a population of approximately 1,250 people would fundamentally alter the demographic and physical scale of the settlement.

This does not mean that the existing community is unwilling to welcome newcomers. Rather, it recognises that successful integration and community cohesion require appropriate scale, facilities, transport, services and resources.

A proposal of this magnitude requires a clear plan demonstrating how community cohesion will be supported and how both existing residents and new residents will be able to access appropriate services and facilities.

9. Suitability of the site

The fundamental question should be whether this is an appropriate location for accommodation on this scale.

The fact that the MOD site may contain buildings capable of being converted into accommodation does not, in itself, demonstrate that the location is suitable for 1,250 residents.

The suitability assessment should consider the whole environment in which the residents will live, including transport, healthcare, pedestrian infrastructure, lighting, shops, emergency services, recreation, access to support services and the impact upon surrounding communities.

A site which is physically capable of accommodating people is not necessarily a site which is socially, environmentally or infrastructurally suitable for accommodating them at this scale.

10. Request for full evidence and assessments

Before any decision is made, I would ask that the relevant authorities publish or make available the evidence and assessments underpinning the decision to identify Piddington as a suitable location.

In particular, I request evidence addressing:

1. Highway and traffic impact;
2. Pedestrian and road safety;
3. Night-time pedestrian safety;
4. Public transport capacity;
5. Healthcare capacity;
6. Police and emergency service capacity;
7. Fire safety and emergency evacuation;
8. Safeguarding;

9. Waste and refuse management;

10. Water, sewage and other utilities;

11. Environmental impact;

12. Community cohesion;

13. Impact upon neighbouring settlements;

14. The cumulative impact of the proposed population increase; and

15. Why a site accommodating approximately 1,250 people has been considered proportionate and appropriate for a community of approximately 315 existing residents.

Conclusion

I respectfully request that the proposal is reconsidered and refused, or that an alternative and more proportionate location is identified.

The issue is not whether migrants should receive appropriate accommodation. They should.

The issue is whether it is reasonable or sustainable to place approximately 1,250 additional people in a small rural community of approximately 315 residents which has no shop, no public house, limited local facilities, inadequate pedestrian infrastructure and limited overnight street lighting.

Such a substantial population increase requires substantially more than suitable buildings. It requires appropriate infrastructure, transport, healthcare, emergency provision, pedestrian safety measures, public services and a realistic strategy for supporting both the existing community and those being accommodated.

In the absence of compelling evidence demonstrating that these matters have been properly assessed and adequately addressed, I believe there are serious grounds to conclude that the proposed site is unsuitable for accommodation on the scale proposed.

I therefore respectfully ask that this objection is formally recorded and fully considered before any decision is made.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]