From: [redacted]
To: Crown Casework
Subject: Objection to Application: PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843
Date: 07 September 2026 21:34:56

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Objection to Urgent Crown Development Application MOD Bicester (Site A)
Application reference: PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843
Site: Bicester Garrison, Launton Road, Oxfordshire, OX25 1AE
Applicant: Home Office

Planning Objection – MOD Bicester Site A, Piddington
Application: PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843

I strongly object to the proposed temporary change of use of MOD Bicester Site A to accommodate up to **1,256 asylum seekers for a period of 10 years**.

This is not a minor or temporary change of use. The application proposes a substantial new settlement, including modular accommodation, healthcare and welfare facilities, staff accommodation, roads, parking, security infrastructure, recreation areas and a new wastewater treatment plant. The scale of the development must therefore be assessed against its full and cumulative impact on the surrounding communities.

1. The scale is fundamentally disproportionate to the surrounding community

The site lies between **Piddington and Upper Arncott**, immediately affecting small rural communities. Piddington itself has approximately 350 residents. A development accommodating up to 1,256 people would therefore introduce a population several times the size of the village.

The planning authority must properly assess whether infrastructure and services can accommodate a development of this scale, rather than treating it simply as the reuse of an existing military site.

2. Highways and transport impacts require rigorous assessment

The application will generate movements by residents, staff, contractors, emergency services and visitors over a ten-year period. The suitability and capacity of the local road network, junctions, pedestrian routes, public transport and emergency access must be demonstrated through robust evidence.

Particular attention should be given to the impact on the rural roads serving Piddington, Upper Arncott and the surrounding villages, rather than assuming that the previous military use makes the proposed use acceptable.

3. Infrastructure and wastewater capacity must be demonstrated

The proposal itself requires a dedicated wastewater treatment plant. This is a clear indication that existing infrastructure cannot simply be assumed to be adequate.

The applicant should demonstrate, with independently verifiable evidence, that water supply, foul drainage, surface-water management, electricity, telecommunications, healthcare and emergency services can safely accommodate the proposed population for

the entire ten-year period.

4. Environmental impacts must be properly considered

The development involves demolition, new modular buildings, roads, parking, infrastructure and a wastewater facility. The environmental consequences of these works and the resulting increase in activity must be properly assessed, including biodiversity, drainage, landscape, lighting, noise, traffic and ecology.

The fact that the land has previously been used for military purposes does not remove the requirement to assess the impacts of the *proposed development*.

5. Community safety and policing

The Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner has already raised concerns regarding the additional policing burden that the proposed site could create, including the resources required both within and outside the site.

The planning decision should therefore be informed by clear evidence that adequate policing, emergency response and safeguarding arrangements will be available without placing unacceptable additional pressure on existing resources.

6. Meaningful public participation is particularly important

Cherwell District Council has stated that it was **not consulted before the proposal was announced**, and has subsequently raised concerns about infrastructure, security, public services and the Government's approach to the planning process.

The use of the **Urgent Crown Development** procedure should not become a substitute for proper scrutiny of material planning considerations.

The fact that the Government considers the proposal nationally urgent does not make the local planning impacts irrelevant.

7. Planning law must be properly applied

The courts have made clear that asylum accommodation does not sit outside the planning system.

In *Braintree District Council v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2023] EWCA Civ 727, the Court of Appeal considered the proposed use of a former military site for up to 1,700 asylum seekers and the interaction between asylum accommodation and planning law.

More recently, *Epping Forest District Council v Somani Hotels Ltd* [2026] EWCA Civ 264 considered whether the use of a hotel for asylum accommodation constituted a material change of use requiring planning permission. The judgment confirms the relevance of sections 55, 57 and 171A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to questions of material change of use and planning control.

Those cases do not establish that asylum accommodation is inherently unlawful. However, they demonstrate that the Government cannot simply treat asylum accommodation as immune from proper planning scrutiny.

8. The proposal should be refused unless the impacts are demonstrably acceptable

The Government's own documentation states that the proposal remains subject to planning, due diligence and the necessary assessments and approvals.

I therefore ask the decision-maker to refuse the application unless and until the applicant has demonstrated, with robust and independently scrutinised evidence, that:

- the scale of the development is appropriate for this rural location;
- the highway network can safely accommodate the additional movements;
- water, drainage and wastewater capacity are adequate;
- healthcare, policing and emergency services can cope without unacceptable additional pressure;
- biodiversity, ecology, landscape, noise, lighting and drainage impacts are acceptable;
- appropriate safeguarding and community-safety measures are secured;
- the cumulative impact on Piddington, Upper Arncott and neighbouring communities has been properly assessed; and
- the exceptional use of the Urgent Crown Development procedure has not resulted in any material planning consideration being inadequately examined.

A ten-year development accommodating up to 1,256 people cannot reasonably be regarded as a minor or inconsequential change. The decision must be based on evidence, proportionality and proper planning considerations—not simply on the Government's need to find alternative accommodation.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

Kind Regards,

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