From: [redacted]
To: Crown Casework
Subject: Planning Application PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843
Date: 10 September 2026 21:50:17

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Dear Secretary of State,

Planning Application PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843

Proposed Asylum Accommodation Centre, Site A, MOD Bicester

I write in my capacity as a Cherwell District Councillor and Bicester Town Councillor for Bicester West Ward to formally object to planning application PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843 and to request that planning permission be refused.

Having reviewed the application documents and listened carefully to the concerns of residents, I am deeply concerned that the Secretary of State is being asked to determine a proposal of extraordinary scale without key matters having been adequately resolved.

This proposal would introduce accommodation for up to 1,256 occupants together with extensive supporting infrastructure including a wastewater treatment plant, security infrastructure, roads, welfare facilities, and staff accommodation on a site that remains isolated from the services and infrastructure normally expected to support a development of this size.

The fundamental question in this case is not whether asylum seekers deserve safe accommodation. They do. The question is whether the applicant has demonstrated, through robust and complete evidence, that this site is suitable for a development of this scale and intensity. In my view, that test has not been met.

Incomplete Technical Evidence

A recurring theme throughout the application is the reliance on future assessments, future mitigation and matters yet to be resolved. Significant questions remain regarding contamination, drainage, flood risk, ecology, utilities, highways and site infrastructure.

It is deeply concerning that the Secretary of State is being asked to approve a development for more than 1,200 residents while key technical investigations remain incomplete. Good planning requires evidence first and decisions second. In this case, that principle appears to have been reversed.

Land Contamination and Public Safety

The site's historic military use raises legitimate concerns regarding land quality and contamination.

The available documentation identifies potential contamination risks, yet important investigative work remains outstanding. Until comprehensive intrusive investigations have been completed, it is impossible to provide confidence that land intended for long-term residential occupation is suitable for its proposed use.

Approving the application before these matters are conclusively addressed would be premature and difficult to justify.

Flooding and Drainage

I am equally concerned by the flood risk and drainage issues identified within the application documents.

The proposal would accommodate a population larger than many villages in Oxfordshire, yet aspects of the drainage strategy remain unresolved. Residents are entitled to expect certainty that surface water can be managed appropriately and that flooding risks will not be increased either on the site itself or elsewhere.

These matters should not be left for future consideration through planning conditions.

Highways and Accessibility

The transport evidence raises significant concerns.

Residents have repeatedly highlighted the limitations of the surrounding highway network and pedestrian infrastructure serving the site. The proposal would place a substantial residential population in a location that is detached from many everyday services and facilities.

The application documentation itself has attracted criticism for inaccuracies, including references to incorrect roads within the transport assessment. Such errors inevitably undermine confidence in the conclusions being presented.

For a proposal of this magnitude, the Secretary of State should expect transport evidence that is comprehensive, accurate and beyond reproach.

Infrastructure Capacity

The application has failed to provide certainty regarding essential infrastructure.

Questions remain regarding electricity supply, wastewater treatment, drainage capacity and wider site servicing arrangements. The proposal includes its own wastewater treatment infrastructure, which itself illustrates the scale of the challenge associated with accommodating more than 1,200 people at this location.

It is extraordinary that planning permission could be contemplated before permanent, deliverable and fully assessed infrastructure solutions have been demonstrated.

Inadequate Opportunity for Public Scrutiny

I am also concerned by the exceptionally short consultation period.

The application documents extend to well over a thousand pages and cover numerous technical disciplines. Yet residents, town councils, district councillors, parish councils and community groups have been afforded only a matter of days in which to review and respond.

This is not a routine planning application. It is one of the most significant planning proposals ever brought forward in Bicester.

The public deserves a meaningful opportunity to examine the evidence and make informed representations. The current timetable falls well short of that standard.

Unsuitable Scale and Location

Even if all technical matters were resolved, serious concerns would remain regarding the scale of the proposal.

A facility accommodating up to 1,256 residents for a period of ten years represents a development of substantial scale.

The site sits in a relatively isolated location and lacks the level of nearby services, public transport connectivity and supporting infrastructure that would ordinarily be expected for a development accommodating a population of this size.

The applicant has not demonstrated that this location represents a sustainable form

of development in planning terms.

Conclusion

As an elected representative, I have received extensive correspondence from residents who feel their concerns have not been adequately considered. They expect decisions of this magnitude to be based on complete evidence, thorough scrutiny and sound planning principles.

At present, the application fails to provide that confidence.

For the reasons set out above, I strongly urge the Secretary of State to refuse planning permission.

Should the Secretary of State nevertheless be minded to grant approval, I request that no decision be made until all outstanding work relating to contamination, drainage, flooding, wastewater treatment, ecology, highways, pedestrian safety, utilities, power supply, fire safety, noise, lighting and site restoration has been completed, independently assessed and subjected to full public scrutiny.

Cllr Michael Wilson

Bicester West

Cherwell District Council

Deputy Group Leader,Reform UK Group

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