From: [redacted]
To: Crown Casework
Cc: calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk; wpwsobjection@gmail.com
Subject: Objection to planning application PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843, Site A, MOD Bicester
Date: 10 September 2026 18:29:02
Importance: High

You don't often get email from [redacted] Learn why this is important

Re: Urgent Crown Development application, MOD Bicester (Site A) — formal representation / objection

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing as a member of the public to object to planning application PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843, the proposed 1,256-person asylum accommodation centre at Site A, MOD Bicester, Bicester Garrison, Launton Road, Oxfordshire, OX25 1AE.

I ask that planning permission be refused.

My concerns and reasons to my objection is based on the information below:

Flooding and drainage concerns
This is an area that floods significantly, and the application's own evidence bears that out: the main accommodation is proposed on one of the lowest and most flood-prone parts of the site. The evidence identifies significant surface-water flood risk and unresolved questions around drainage and attenuation. This should be fully resolved before, not after, a decision to house over a thousand people on the land.

An incomplete evidence base
The application's own supporting documents acknowledge that parts of the evidence base are incomplete. The ecological consultant's own survey states that it cannot be treated as a comprehensive assessment, and species surveys remain outstanding. Objection evidence submitted on this application has also identified missing biodiversity and fire-safety information. An application of this scale should not be determined against gaps of this kind.

Ground contamination has not been resolved
No borehole investigation has been undertaken to test the ground for contamination. A 2010 land quality assessment found that areas investigated at this site were generally unsuitable for redevelopment to a domestic end use without remediation, and identified potential contamination risks at Site A. The more recent assessment submitted with this application does not resolve the contamination question raised by that earlier work.

Transport and pedestrian safety
The Transport Assessment submitted with this application repeatedly refers to the B1104, rather than the B4011, which is the road that actually borders the site. Objection evidence

has also identified a history of injury collisions on the nearby B4011, and the lack of a continuous footway or lighting along much of that route. An assessment that appears to reference the wrong road cannot be relied upon to demonstrate that pedestrian and traffic safety have been properly considered.

infrastructure is not confirmed
The application does not demonstrate a confirmed, reliable, permanent electricity or wastewater solution. The Utilities and Infrastructure Assessment itself states that the condition and capacity of the existing electricity network cannot presently be relied upon, and questions remain over sewage capacity and the proposed wastewater arrangements. I do not believe a facility housing well over a thousand people should proceed without these basic questions being resolved and published in full.

The representation period is too short
The published representation period for this application runs from 7 to 17 September 2026, 11 days, roughly half the 21-day period that Crown development legislation sets as standard for consultation on applications of this kind. Nearly two months passed between the application being submitted on 6 July 2026 and it being published for comment on 2 September 2026, and its supporting documents run to well over 1,000 pages across multiple technical disciplines. Eleven days does not give residents, the council, or technical specialists a fair opportunity to examine an application of this scale and complexity.

This is not the first time this proposal has been refused
In 2003, a proposal to use this same site for asylum accommodation went to public inquiry, and an independent planning inspector rejected it, citing the site's isolation, risks to social cohesion, and the strain it would place on local services. Separately, in 2017, Cherwell District Council refused a far smaller application (planning reference 17/00145/F) for a 16 family Traveller caravan site on land near Widnell Lane, Piddington, in the same immediate area. I would ask directly why a proposal for a facility of this scale, on this same land, is now going ahead through an expedited process with less scrutiny than either of those earlier, much smaller applications received.

Value for public money, for supposedly temporary accommodation
This facility is being justified as a way of moving people out of hotel accommodation and reducing cost to the taxpayer. I do not believe that case has been made, and I do not believe this represents good use of public money.

The National Audit Office reported in March 2024 that the Home Office's large-sites asylum accommodation programme is expected to cost more overall than the hotels it was meant to replace: £46 million more than hotel accommodation over the period assessed, against a programme budgeted at £1.2 billion, having originally been projected to save £94 million against hotel costs. Occupancy also fell well short of target, with only around 900 people housed across the programme's sites by January 2024. The financial case for large sites of this kind has already been shown, by the government's own auditor, not to hold up in practice.

This site adds further cost on top of that picture. It is a former military site with no existing residential infrastructure: the application itself acknowledges that the condition and capacity of the existing electricity network cannot presently be relied upon, and that questions remain over wastewater and sewage capacity. Meeting those gaps means new permanent electricity supply, a wastewater treatment plant, and drainage and attenuation works, on top of whatever remediation the unresolved contamination question above may require. These are substantial capital costs to incur for accommodation described as temporary, and the application itself proposes use of the site for up to 10 years, which is a long period for something badged as a temporary, cost-saving measure.

I am asking for a clear, published value-for-money case for this specific site, covering the full capital cost of the infrastructure works set out above, set against the National Audit Office's findings on the wider programme and against the cost of realistic alternatives, before any final decision is taken. Public money should not be committed to a decade-long infrastructure programme on this site without that case being made and published in full.

The council has been excluded from a process meant to involve it
This application is proceeding under the Urgent Crown Development procedure, which allows the Secretary of State to decide directly and bypasses Cherwell District Council's normal planning process. Cherwell District Council has stated it was not consulted in advance and was notified only hours before the plan became public. This sits uneasily alongside the government's own 'fair share' approach to asylum dispersal, which is premised on local authorities agreeing and managing their area's share of placements. If the fair share model depends on local authorities taking a fair, agreed share, I would ask why our own council was excluded from this decision entirely, and what mechanism exists now for the council's, or residents', representations to carry any real weight in it.

What I am asking for?

- Publication in full of the outstanding ecological, biodiversity and fire-safety information before any decision is taken.
- Independent resolution of the contamination question raised by the 2010 land quality assessment, including proper borehole investigation.
- Full resolution of the surface-water flood risk and drainage questions identified for the main accommodation area.
- A corrected Transport Assessment that properly addresses the B4011, including its collision history and lack of continuous footway and lighting.
- Confirmation of a reliable, permanent electricity and wastewater solution, published in full, before any decision is taken.
- An extension of the representation period to the standard 21 days, or longer, given the scale and complexity of the application.
- A clear explanation of why this site is going ahead now, at this scale, having been refused for the same purpose in 2003 and refused for a far smaller use as recently as 2017.
- A full, published value-for-money assessment for this site — covering the capital cost of the electricity, wastewater, drainage and remediation works required — set

against the National Audit Office's findings on the large-sites programme and against the cost of realistic alternatives, before any decision is taken.

- A clear explanation of why Cherwell District Council was excluded from this decision, and confirmation of what role it and residents will have in any final decision.

I would be grateful for a substantive response addressing each of these points, and for confirmation that this letter is registered as a formal representation ahead of the 17 September 2026 deadline.

Yours faithfully,
Deborah Mortimer
[redacted]