[redacted]

From: Hugh Webster [redacted]
Sent: 13 September 2026 09:28
To: Crown Casework
Cc: calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk
Subject: Objection to PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843

[redacted]

[redacted]

Dear Crown Casework Team,

I am writing to object to the proposed development at MOD Bicester Site A, reference PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843.

My objection is based on the suitability of this particular site, the adequacy of the supporting evidence, the use of the Urgent Crown Development process, and the potential impact on nearby rural communities and businesses.

The application proposes accommodation for up to 1,256 non-detained residents for a period of 10 years. Given the scale and duration of the proposal, I believe the site should only be approved if the Secretary of State is satisfied that the surrounding road network, pedestrian routes, drainage, utilities, local services, policing and community impacts have all been properly assessed and can be safely managed. I do not believe the submitted information currently demonstrates that sufficiently.

Highway and pedestrian safety

The applicant's own transport material acknowledges that the site has poor pedestrian and cycling accessibility and that walking for local journeys is not recommended. Despite this, residents would be free to leave the site, meaning increased pedestrian movement along local lanes and public rights of way is entirely foreseeable.

This is particularly concerning in an area characterised by narrow rural roads, limited footways, poor lighting and limited natural surveillance.

[redacted]

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These concerns are not based on assumptions about the behaviour of any particular group. They arise from the physical reality of locating up to 1,256 non-detained residents at a rural site with poor pedestrian connectivity, while those residents remain free to leave the site.

I would therefore ask the Secretary of State to require a detailed assessment of likely pedestrian movements from the site, including routes towards Blackthorn and Bicester, and specifically the potential effect on rural businesses, farms, equestrian premises, lone workers and public rights of way.

Drainage, flooding and utilities

I am also concerned that the application appears to leave a number of important technical matters unresolved or dependent on further work after permission is granted.

The supporting documents identify existing surface-water drainage issues and areas of flood risk, while further investigation and modelling appear still to be required. There are also uncertainties around the capacity and condition of water, electricity and wastewater infrastructure.

Given the size of the proposed population, I do not believe these matters should be treated as secondary details or deferred until after permission is granted.

Before approval is granted, the applicant should be required to demonstrate clearly that adequate and resilient drainage, water, electricity and wastewater infrastructure is available for the full proposed occupancy.

Scale, duration and suitability

Although described as temporary, the application seeks permission for 10 years. That represents a substantial long-term change to the local area and should be assessed accordingly.

The suitability of the location should therefore be judged on the basis of full occupation over a decade, not as though it were a short-lived emergency measure.

The proposal also appears to rely heavily on shuttle transport, on-site services and operational management to reduce impacts beyond the site boundary. These measures may help, but they do not remove the fact that residents would be free to leave the site and use surrounding roads, paths and local areas.

Use of the Urgent Crown Development process

I am particularly concerned by the Government's reliance on urgency to justify an expedited planning process.

Parliamentary answers have confirmed that the Home Office first informed the MOD of a proposal to potentially use MOD Bicester for asylum accommodation in November 2025, and that the Head of Establishment at MOD Bicester was engaged on the proposal at that time.

That means the Government had been considering this site for many months before the public announcement and before the current expedited planning process.

In those circumstances, I find it difficult to understand why local communities and statutory bodies should now be asked to respond within such a compressed timetable on the basis that the proposal is exceptionally urgent.

If a private applicant submitted a full planning application of this scale with significant questions still outstanding around drainage, infrastructure, pedestrian accessibility and operational arrangements, I do not believe those shortcomings would simply be overlooked because the applicant wished to proceed quickly.

The Government should be subject to the same expectation of robust evidence and proper scrutiny as any other applicant. A planning system which appears to apply one standard to private applicants and another to Government risks undermining public confidence in the process.

National importance does not remove the need for adequate evidence, procedural fairness or proper consideration of local impacts.

Duty to protect existing communities

When considering a development of this scale, I believe Government has a fundamental responsibility to give proper weight to the safety and wellbeing of the people who already live and work in the surrounding area.

That does not mean that every perceived concern should automatically prevent development. It does mean that the Government should be able to demonstrate, with evidence, that foreseeable effects on local residents, businesses, lone workers, road users and rural communities have been properly identified and mitigated before permission is granted.

In my view, the current application does not yet provide sufficient reassurance on those points.

Conclusion

I therefore respectfully request that planning permission is refused unless and until the applicant can demonstrate that:

- safe and appropriate pedestrian arrangements can be provided for the surrounding rural area;
- the impact on [redacted], nearby rural businesses and public rights of way has been properly assessed;
- the specific impact of increased pedestrian use through the public footpath crossing [redacted] has been considered;
- adequate drainage, water, electricity and wastewater capacity is confirmed;
- healthcare, policing, security and transport arrangements are fully funded and deliverable;
- the effects on lone workers, equestrian businesses and isolated rural premises have been properly considered; and
- the full effects of occupation at the maximum proposed capacity of 1,256 residents over 10 years are understood and adequately mitigated.

Yours faithfully,

Hugh Webster
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