Mr Salim Sajid
[redacted]

12th September 2026

Dear Cherwell Development Casework Unit.

Re: Site A, MOD Bicester Application Reference - PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843 – Formal Objection

I am writing to you personally in the hope that you might make representation for my deep concerns over the current intended use of the above site adjacent to our village to house 1,250 single adult men in a "open" location, which I believe to be totally unsuitable and without adequate existing infrastructure that will have a detrimental impact on my home, life and those of my neighbours in Piddington and the surrounding villages and communities.

[redacted]

I'd like to set out the reasons for my objections below for your consideration.

Due Process

When the Home Office announced the intention to use Site A as an asylum centre on 25th June 2026, I was surprised that neither you, Cherwell District Council nor our Parish Council, were consulted. This came as a complete surprise to many and created a great deal of unhelpful speculation, rumour, stress and anxiety. [redacted]

I'm aware that a previous similar proposal was pursued in early 2000, rejected in 2003 and ultimately abandoned in 2005. What has changed at this site since then? Why has this history not been considered?

Having taken the time to read the adopted policies in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031, including Policy PSD1 (presumption in favour of sustainable development), Policy SLE4 (facilitating safe and suitable access to all users, Policy INF1 (infrastructure to support development) and the plan's environmental and heritage protection policies, I am at a loss to see how the actions of the Home Office are in any way congruent. It feels like the whole process needs to be slowed down, assessed properly and given wider due consideration of both the above policies and, indeed many other aspects, I'll comment on below.

My personal experience of Due Process and its importance, harp back to when I was a director and shareholder of [redacted] I recall the detailed planning application process I undertook, the time, cost and careful consultations that I undertook on the following areas:

1. A detailed traffic assessment of the site, its impact on the local community, surrounding businesses and what we could do to alleviate this.

2. An assessment of the flood risks to both our site, our neighbours and the environment. The outcome of this added a lot of money to the establishment of adequate containment waterways, flood protection and re-introduction of flora and fauna to stimulate the growth of wider vegetation and wildlife.
3. Considerable investment in enabling our own utilities infrastructure to reduce the impact on surrounding businesses and communities for electricity, mains water, wastewater, fouls, emissions, light pollution, noise impact and general nuisance. These were all considerable and timely investments, but the right thing to do for the long term.
4. We carried out detailed ecological and biodiversity studies on the site and added suitable housing for wildlife and ring-fenced areas where we felt it important to protect the environment.
5. We diligently considered all the guidelines, any conflicts local and national planning policies and adopted compromises in the design and our approach. My intention as someone who lived locally, was to remain proud and responsible for what was created.

The outcome was a successful and thriving addition to the local environment that still trades today, albeit as a [redacted] but something I remain proud of. All within the prescribed framework and national planning policy.

My question is why has the Home Office deemed it fit to ignore so much of the due process that I followed above? Why are there inconsistencies between what is required on us as citizens and individuals and the approach of government? How does this reassure communities of fair representation from those we elect as part of the democratic process. How will the Home Office treat the reports commissioned so far on the suitability (or unsuitability) of Site A?

Highways, access and pedestrian safety

[redacted] I have occasionally found myself walking along the verge of the B4011, the main access and egress from Site A. There is no pedestrians' walkway, pavement or even a track on either side of this busy road in either direction and I have often seen vehicles passing dangerously close to the odd pedestrian taking the risk of walking along uneven, overgrown verges, with hidden drains, kerb edges and other vegetation. I recall once having a "near miss" when a lorry came close to hitting me as I walked along this road.

One individual's experience is dangerous enough, but with the risk of almost 1,300 potentially young men, bored and seeking to discover the local area, this can only be a recipe for a potential accident! Has this risk been assessed and what is the containment plan?

By simply offering infrequent transport to ferry these men to and from Bicester town centre, which is almost 5 miles away, this is an inadequate solution. Inevitably there will be some men that choose to try and walk, which will become dangerous for them and road users, especially as there is inadequate lighting along the carriageway. British Summer Time ends in October, and the light levels will further deteriorate leading to further dangers. How is the impending winters hours being planned for in terms of safety for all concerned.

There is already considerable traffic coming from HMP Bullingdon, the nearby MOD sports pitches and the adjacent traveller's site along Widnell Lane, only 150m away. This will add further risk to all parties.

Finally, as a former dog owner, I very much feel that [redacted] park at Jubilee Nature Reserve, which is right next to Site A, and a place often used by dog walkers as a safe area, will potentially become a

place that asylum seekers will come to loiter at and potentially cause noise, generate litter, and bring a risk of conflict with local residents, especially our women, who are feeling extremely vulnerable.

Surely a proper traffic assessment survey should be undertaken, risks properly assessed and a suitable plan to invest appropriately be adopted? This might take time but surely is the correct approach and one that was demanded of me as a businessman.

Adequate and suitable infrastructure

As I understand it, there are currently no adequate provisions on Site A to accommodate and safely house these young men. The site has never been used for accommodation, so has no suitable infrastructure at all.

Electricity – Although there seems to be high level High Voltage pylons running across the site, there are currently very little adequate power provisions to cater for the needs of 1,250 men, for lighting, heating, washing facilities, on site catering, security, safety and entertainment. I have been told that there is a plan to bring diesel powered generators onto site to provide "temporary" power. Having had to deploy these on a short term myself, I'm aware that they are incredibly expensive to operate, generate undesirable pollution to the environment, are very noisy and often prone to breaking down if run for long sustained period of time, not to mentioned highly suspectable to vandalism or fuel theft.

As a local resident, I've experienced several power cuts in the village over the years so am aware that the current provision of electrical supply is under severe pressure. Having checked the local plan with SSEN, there are no current intentions or budget to improve the infrastructure, so how is Site A going to be provided for in a sustainable, viable and economic manner?

Gas – There is no mains natural gas pipeline anywhere on this side of Bicester. [redacted] already relies on using electricity, heating oil, kerosene and logs for heating and hot water. Without natural gas, Site A will have to seek alternative sources of energy to provide adequate heating and cooking provisions. Is this suitable for such large numbers on a sustained basis? What will the associated costs be?

Water, drainage and sewerage capacity – As we come to the end of this summer, one of the driest on record, we're still under a hosepipe ban by Thames Water. We've had several days, when water supply has been on extremely low pressure or sometimes non-existent. With a population of just over 300, the water supply is simply inadequate. So how will this be able to provide for a further 1,300 people, along with support staff and security?

I'm not aware that Thames Water have any current plans for improvements to either water storage or additional supply infrastructure in the area, so how will the Home Office make provision for this without a direct impact on our village? What are the costs of this over the short to medium term?

I'm also led to believe there are no current fouls drainage on site, so the toilets / washing facilities and other wastewater will need to be collected, pumped, and manually removed from site. Having installed sewerage treatment plants and sceptic tanks [redacted] I'm fully aware of the huge investment costs and planning requirements from the Environmental Agency – have these licences been obtained? What provision has been made to contain any spills risks so that the local area, wildlife and water course ways are not impacted?

Flood Risks – In recent years, with the growing incidents of flash floods in our area, I've personally witnessed occasions when our village roads, the roads out to Ludgershall and, indeed the B4011 have been impassable, especially along Widnell Lane and Lower End, both of which were flooded and closed for several days. The local drain system became so overwhelmed during 2025 that my neighbour experienced flooding to his property. There is no doubt that some of this negative impact has been caused by the overuse of the local flood network and development of local housing and warehousing with adequate provision.

I'm aware that the Environment Agency consider the local area as "high risk" and, to my knowledge, no local impact study has been commissioned to Site A. Why not? This will be a risk to not only the inhabitants but to us also as immediate neighbours.

Finally, with the above comes the risk of disturbing areas of know asbestos and spent munitions chemicals, which we understand are spread around the site. These could find their way into the local waterways if they are not dealt with safely and in a measure manner. How is this being handled?

Welfare and safeguarding of Site A occupants

Without doubt, since the news was announced, there has been a great deal of press coverage, social media and political vitriol. It has created a great deal of worry, anxiety and stress. All of which I chose to come to Piddington to get away from.

I can only imagine these young men will face some intimidation from antagonists, many of whom will come to our area to seek trouble and create tension. These will be worrying times.

1. What provision has there been for adequate policing resources? There is no police station in Bicester, so local support will be limited without providing facilities. Have these been considered?
2. How are Thames Valley Police being supported with this plan. What additional resource will there be in Bicester town centre, when the bus transports potentially 1,300 young men in and out of town from Site A?
3. What additional support / resource will be provided for other services, such as South Central Ambulance Services, Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Services and the NHS Integrated Care Board. All of these services will highly likely experience additional demands on already stretched resources.
4. What provisions have been made on local GP Surgeries to cater for the medical needs and safeguarding of these young men, some of whom have arrived from war torn countries, so may have complex mental health needs. I'm all too aware that my local GP Surgery at Brill can take up to 6 weeks to provide me with an appointment, so how will they cope with the addition of 1,300 potential patients.

I'm also extremely worried about the potential cultural clashes between both the asylum seekers and the occupants of the existing Traveller's site on Widnell Lane, right next door. Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed? What risks does this highlight?

I've read reports of a similar situation at a similar site in RAF Wethersfield found that large-scale, isolated sites with so many young men together with limited facilities can carry all sorts of mental health issues, tensions and the risk of deterioration and far worse ramification – these could well spill over into our community and present a real risk to us, especially our women.

Does this truly represent value for money?
Whilst I recognise there is a great deal of media driven public and political pressure to "remove asylum seekers from hotels" to save on money – has Site A been properly assessed? Where is the evidence and options appraisal and can it be published please?

1. With the issues around the infrastructure, meaning a considerable investment is needed to prepare adequately to accommodate such high numbers, what will the financial cost of this be and how does it compare with other sites being considered?
2. The costs, already being committed to clearing a site that has no accommodation, nor has it ever had any dwellings as it was never used for such a purpose, must surely represent poor value for money?
3. What time span are these costs being estimated over? My understanding is that the Home Office is operating under "Urgent Crown Development" measures to fast track the process. Under Class Q planning guidelines, this "temporary" measure can only be used for a period of 12 months. What happens when it is formally assessed under normal planning application processes? What happens if the change of use to Site A is deemed unsuitable / unlawful? Will this not represent a waste of taxpayers' money?
4. Will the government offer to have this plan be scrutinised by a Parliamentary Cross Party Committee the determine due process on the spending and associated value?

Summary
Personally, I do not have an issue with the sensible, measured and considered accommodation of asylum seekers on Site A, if it has been adequately planned, prepared, costed and the risks of safety properly assessed on our local community. The current process has not considered any of this adequately. To run "rough-shod" over our community and to clearly ignore Planning law and the National Framework seems to flout process, which does little to install confidence in the public of equality and fairness, so I fully and wholeheartedly wish to register my objection.

Yours faithfully

Mr Salim Sajid