From: [redacted]
To: Crown Casework
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Subject: PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843 Objection MOD Bicester site A
Date: 15 September 2026 14:00:10

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Dear Secretary of State

I wish to object to the application for the proposed use of MOD Bicester Site A to accommodate up to 1,256 people for a period of ten years.

I want to make clear at the outset that I do not object to providing accommodation for people seeking asylum, nor to the people who would live at this site. People seeking asylum need safe, decent and humane accommodation, and communities have a responsibility to play their part in providing it. My objection is specifically to the exceptional scale of this proposal, its concentration in this location, and the lack of evidence currently available to demonstrate that a development of this size can operate here safely and sustainably.

I am particularly concerned that this is an application for full planning permission for a very substantial development, yet many matters which would normally be fundamental to assessing such an application remain unresolved.

Cherwell District Council's professional planning officers have concluded that the application is not sufficiently defined or assessed to enable an informed planning judgement to be made. Remarkably, they state that, were this an ordinary application made to Cherwell, it would not currently meet the Council's validation requirements for a full application. Among other things, there is currently no proposed detailed site layout, floor plans, elevations, sections, levels plan, roof or plant plan, landscape plan, lighting plan or detailed access and servicing layout. Instead, the parameters submitted could permit development up to 12 metres high across a substantial area, despite other assessments apparently being based on two-storey buildings no more than approximately six metres high.

This is not simply a technical matter. Without knowing what is actually going to be built and where, it is extremely difficult to assess reliably matters including landscape impact, living conditions, daylight, fire separation, emergency access, drainage, flood safety, ecology, noise, lighting, pedestrian routes, parking and servicing.

I am also concerned about whether this is a sustainable location for a residential population of 1,256 people. This population would be substantially larger than that of either Piddington or Upper Arncott.

The people accommodated here would not be detained and would quite properly be free to leave the site. It is therefore essential that the planning assessment considers their ability to

reach shops, healthcare, public transport and other everyday services safely and independently. This is as much an issue concerning the welfare and safety of the future residents themselves as it is one concerning neighbouring communities.

The B4011 is a rural 50 mph road and there is currently no continuous safe pedestrian route from the proposed principal entrance. The submitted Transport Assessment itself identifies limited accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport. It is not sufficient simply to assume that most journeys will be provided by organised transport. A population of 1,256 people will inevitably generate many individual journeys at different times of day, including when organised transport is unavailable.

There are similarly unresolved questions concerning foul and surface-water drainage, wastewater treatment, utilities, power supply, ecology, contamination, fire safety, healthcare and emergency-service capacity. The site also has a military history, with potential contamination, asbestos, ground risks and unexploded ordnance, and there are identified surface-water flood risks and ecological constraints.

These matters should be demonstrated to have workable solutions before planning permission is granted, rather than fundamental questions of feasibility being left to conditions afterwards.

I am also concerned about the scale of the proposal itself. The national requirement for asylum accommodation and the Government's desire to reduce its reliance on hotels are important considerations. However, they establish a need for accommodation nationally; they do not by themselves establish that accommodating as many as 1,256 people at this particular location is appropriate.

There should therefore be a clear justification for why a facility of this exceptional size is required here and why a smaller development, or accommodation distributed across a greater number of sites, would not meet the identified need with fewer planning impacts.

This question is particularly important because the proposed use is for ten years. Ten years is a substantial period. The proposal should therefore be assessed on the basis of its long-term effects on transport, infrastructure, environment, neighbouring settlements and, importantly, the living conditions and accessibility of the people who would be accommodated there.

I am also concerned about the extremely compressed consultation process. Cherwell's officers note that the public consultation amounts to only ten calendar days/eight working days for a large and technically complex application, while important information and specialist consultee responses remain outstanding. The Government's own original

programme envisaged an earlier application and decision date which have already passed. It is therefore reasonable to ask why sufficient additional time cannot now be allowed for the missing evidence to be produced and properly scrutinised.

I therefore ask the Secretary of State not to grant planning permission on the evidence currently available.

At a minimum, the applicant should be required to provide the missing technical and design information, demonstrate that the development can operate safely and sustainably, justify the proposed maximum capacity of 1,256 at this particular location, and allow a further reasonable period of public and statutory consultation before a decision is made.

If those matters cannot be satisfactorily demonstrated, the application should be refused or substantially reduced in scale.

Finally, I want to emphasise that I would raise the same planning concerns about a proposal to accommodate 1,256 people on this site for any other residential purpose. Indeed, some of the concerns identified above – particularly safe pedestrian access to services and healthcare – affect the prospective residents of the development themselves. My objection concerns the scale, location, sustainability, safety and evidential basis of the proposed development, not the nationality, background or immigration status of the people who would live there.

kind regards

