Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to object to the following planning application, as a local resident of [redacted]
Planning application PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843, for the proposed 1,256-person asylum accommodation centre at Site A, MOD Bicester, Bicester Garrison, Launton Road, Oxfordshire, OX26 1AE.

I ask that the planning permission be refused on the following grounds:

Lack of clarity over the temporary or longer-term nature of the asylum accommodation:
The Home Office has submitted this application as an 'Urgent Crown Development' for a temporary (10 year) asylum accommodation centre at MOD Bicester (Site A). The 'temporary' nature of the proposal is questionable, based on the Statement of National Importance, which sets out the intention for the site to become a 'long-term' asylum accommodation solution. The nature of the application document and associated infrastructure, also implies the proposed infrastructure at Site A, is a long-term accommodation site. Therefore, the Home Office is not entirely clear with its intentions for this application and this prevents the community from making a fair assessment and therefore informed decision, about the future of this site.

Same Site rejected by Public Inquiry 2003:
A virtually identical planning proposal was submitted for the same site, which was rejected by a Public Inquiry, led by Paul Taylor, in 2003. The geographical and physical constraints of Site A have not altered since. The 2003 Public Inquiry found:

- Site A is entirely unsuitable for a high-density, resident asylum population.
- The site is too isolated, undermining social cohesion in small, nearby rural communities, and place unprecedented strain on local services.

The current application ignores established planning history that geographic and infrastructure constraints were identified by the Inspector, and these remain unchanged and unresolved today.

Incomplete/Insufficient Ecology Surveys
The habitat survey of the site was not undertaken during the optimal window, during April-October, as recommended by Natural England. The survey was conducted between 26 March 2026 – 10 April 2026. Therefore, the bat survey is flawed, by conducting it while certain bat species are likely to still be in hibernation. Full emergence of the bat population is not until April and into May, when temperatures have warmed up and insects hatch and are prevalent. As the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal itself cites: "*To determine the presence or likely absence of protected species, usually requires multiple visits at suitable times of year. This survey focuses on assessing the potential of the site to support species of note…from only a single visit."*
Bats are fully protected and there has been evidence of some of the rarer species recorded on this site by local bat experts, in August 2026. Further assessments are required and if roosting bats found, which there will likely be, a European Protected Species (EPS)

mitigation licence will be needed, otherwise proposed works undertaken on the site, will be illegal.
As recommended by the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, a further seven surveys need to be conducted, typically between April and September, to determine whether reptiles protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, are present. Mitigation measures cannot be confirmed until these surveys take place and if they are not conducted, it is unlawful. This is particularly important, as the report cites a ditch on site considered suitable to support the breeding of Great Crested Newts (GCN), therefore further assessment is required to determine their presence.
Additionally, a year-long survey is recommended for the protected and red listed Hazel Dormouse, of which there is an approximate population of 750,000-930,000, a drop of 70% since 2000 (People's trust for Endangered Species, 2023).
Therefore, before this proposal can go ahead, vital targeted surveys should be conducted for protected and endangered species that likely exist on the site, including: Hazel Dormouse, Barn owl, Great Crested Newts, Bats, reptiles and invertebrates.

Flawed Utilities and Infrastructure Assessment
There is incomplete site information and key data gaps about the foul water strategy. Potential lack of supporting capacity at nearby Bicester waste water treatment works, means the onerous RIBA Stage 2 design option of a new on-site treatment works with discharge to watercourse, could facilitate a fundamental environmental catastrophe, if allowed to go ahead. Due to information considering discharge locations being redacted, one must assume that this is a clear cause for hydrological pathway of concern.
Despite the redacted material, historic flood/drainage studies and Environment Agency information, suggest that the likely discharge will be one of three locations:

- River Ray tributary to the east of Site A
- Piddington Brook
- Into the main River Ray

In any event, all three will ultimately lead into the River Ray system. In particular, the potential for the discharge to drain into the nearby watercourse and eastern tributary of the River Ray, will cause environmental fall out downstream at the SSSI Arncott Meadows. Natural England must be consulted further, in order to rule out any future ecological damage to rare flora and fauna, and wildlife within the Ray catchment.
The exact watercourse and discharge point must be determined as per the assessment recommendations, including further surveys, capacity assessments and stakeholder consultations, which are imperative.
Allowing the onerous foul water strategy to progress, would have a huge detrimental effect for the future of our family farm. [redacted] the farmland of which is intersected [redacted]. The land is periodically used for sheep grazing, is cut for hay each June, and regularly floods. Not only will discharge from Site A affect the LWS of the fields within the farm curtilage, but the discharge could have huge biohazard implications with sheep grazing land that regularly floods, risking ingesting discharged contaminated water, which would eventually pass into the food chain.

In terms of pollution control, there is no detailed water quality treatment design to demonstrate compliance with the water quality requirements of the current National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Multiple treatment stages will be

needed to manage runoff quality and minimise pollution entering the watercourse, the River Ray. Therefore, further detailed water quality treatment design must be carried out before this application is approved.
Additionally, no foul water provision has been made to account for once the total numbers of occupants are in situ; and with the foul arisings being tankered off, not being a viable option.
To date, the Home Office has not liaised with the Environment Agency to address regulatory requirements and secure consents.
Engagement with the Environment Agency, sewer undertaker and relevant planning stakeholders is imperative, in order to comply with statutory and regulatory requirements and to keep this application lawful.

Unsustainable and unsafe location:
The remote nature of this site does not offer sustainable or safe travel routes for the Site A occupants. There is no street lighting and no footways. The B4011 is a 50MPH highway with a distinct blind spot from oncoming traffic when crossing from A Site towards Bullingdon Prison bus stop, making this a dangerous site for free-to-roam men and without a night time curfew.
The NPPF dictates that significant development should be focused on locations which are, or can be, made sustainable – limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of travel modes. The Home Office's reliance on private shuttle networks confirms the site's failure to meet these national criteria, forcing unsustainable modes of transport.

Conclusion:
The Home Office's attempts to bypass standard local planning channels via an Urgent Crown Development route, does not erase the material proposed planning failures of this site. The proposal violates Cherwell Local Plan Policies, SLE 4, BSC 12, ESD 10 and ESD 15. It also fails the core tests of NPPF Chapters 9, 12 and 14, and contradicts the 2003 Public Inquiry.

Based on the above points, I strongly urge the Secretary of State to refuse this planning application.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]