From: [redacted]
To: Crown Casework; Ministerial Correspondence
Cc: "Calum Miller MP"; "Planning"
Subject: Formal Planning Objection - 26/01833/CROWN
Date: 16 September 2026 21:35:54

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Application: 26/01833/CROWN
Site: MOD Bicester – Site A
Process: Urgent Crown Development
Submitted to: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)
Reference: PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843

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1. Overview of What Is Being Proposed

The Home Office is requesting approval for a temporary change of use lasting 10 years at MOD Bicester Site A. The plan is to provide accommodation for as many as 1,256 asylum seekers who will not be detained. The proposed works include:

- Keeping and adapting Building A6 for continued use
- Tearing down existing buildings
- Erecting new modular blocks for accommodation
- Establishing health and welfare facilities on the site
- Laying out new internal roads, car parking, access ways, and housing for staff
- Fitting out security systems and infrastructure
- Building a plant to treat wastewater
- Setting aside areas for open space and recreation

Since this falls under the Urgent Crown Development process, MHCLG holds the ultimate decision-making power—not Cherwell District Council.

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2. Procedural Issues That Undermine the Proposal

A. Consultation Period

Cherwell District Council has made it clear in public statements that the time allowed for consultation is very short. Local people have not been provided with a fair chance to engage. When a scheme of this kind involves placing 1,256 people in one location, such a limited consultation timeframe is unsuitable and may fall short of basic standards of procedural fairness.

B. Lack of Local Democratic Oversight

CDC has stated that it is unable to receive representations from the public and is participating only in an advisory capacity. This strips away the customary democratic checks that accompany substantial developments and shifts excessive decision-making control to central government, with inadequate examination at the local level.

C. Missing Information

The draft committee report prepared by CDC points out multiple topics where key data is either lacking or not fully developed. These gaps cover:

- Impacts on transport networks and highways
- Strain placed on local services and infrastructure
- Consequences for surrounding communities
- Risks related to drainage, wastewater management, and flooding
- Effects on the environment and ecology

Considerations around noise, artificial lighting, and local amenity
- Matters of site security, safety, and access for emergency services

A project of this size cannot be judged properly unless these shortcomings are resolved.

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3. Planning Grounds for Objection

A. Transport and Highways

CDC has already voiced significant worries. Access to the site depends on country lanes—especially the stretch between Blackthorn Bridge and Arncott—that are already burdened by MOD-related movements, freight traffic, and daily commuters. Adding 1,256 residents alongside staff and service vehicles will:

- Worsen traffic congestion on Ploughley Road, Arncott Road, and the B4011
- Heighten safety risks at constricted stretches and pinch points
- Impose excessive demands on rural junctions that were never intended for heavy traffic flows

No satisfactory measures to mitigate transport impacts have been put forward.

B. Local Services and Infrastructure

CDC has officially recorded that the scheme gives rise to grave doubts over whether local services can cope. Medical practices, schools, emergency responders, and community resources across Bicester, Arncott, Ambrosden, and Launton are already working at or past capacity. The submission fails to set out:

- The manner in which medical care will be delivered
- The way emergency services will handle call-outs inside a secured compound
- How local facilities will absorb the extra pressure

This runs counter to NPPF paragraphs 8, 20, 92, and 104.

C. Effects on Nearby Communities

CDC has drawn attention to worries about how neighbouring settlements like Piddington and Upper Arncott will be affected. Local residents have voiced:

- Unease about the sheer size and intensity of the scheme
- Apprehension over noise, lighting, and round-the-clock operations
- Concern that the rural character of the area will be eroded
- Doubts about community cohesion and whether small villages can take in such a large influx

These amount to legitimate planning matters under NPPF paragraphs 130 and 185.

D. Drainage, Wastewater, and Flood Risk

The plans feature a new wastewater treatment facility together with large areas of impermeable surfacing. CDC has flagged worries about drainage capacity and flood hazard. The site lies near delicate watercourses and drainage networks, and in the absence of thorough modelling, the chance of contamination or surcharge cannot be ruled out.

E. Ecological and Environmental Harm

CDC has noted ecological consequences that need more detailed evaluation. Taking down buildings, putting in modular units, and adding lighting and security measures will:

- Interrupt routes used by wildlife
- Raise levels of light pollution
- Diminish biological diversity
- Cause lasting damage to the natural environment that does not align with NPPF paragraph 174

F. Site Safety and Emergency Access

CDC has expressed concerns about safety on the site and how emergency vehicles would gain entry. The scheme features:

- Security installations
- Gated or controlled entry points
- Housing for staff located on-site
- A substantial number of people in a relatively isolated setting

Arrangements for emergency access are not clearly defined, and the risks linked to housing a large non-detained group within a secured environment have not been properly evaluated.

G. Amenity Impacts

CDC has pointed to issues connected with noise, lighting, and local amenity. The sheer scale of the development means there will inevitably be:

- Ongoing movements of vehicles
- Lighting operating through the night
- Continuous activity across the site
- Higher noise levels impacting Arncott, Piddington, and the wider countryside

This is at odds with NPPF paragraph 185.

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4. Strategic and Policy Conflicts

A. Local Plan Strategy

The Cherwell Local Plan does not designate MOD Bicester Site A for major residential or quasi-residential uses. The proposal clashes with:

- The spatial strategy adopted for the district
- Policies aimed at protecting rural areas
- Principles that tie development to available infrastructure

B. Unsustainable Location

The site is distant from:

- Public transport links
- Places of work
- Community amenities
- Shops and retail services
- Medical facilities

This runs contrary to NPPF paragraphs 8, 105, and 110.

C. Ten-Year Temporary Use

A development lasting a decade and housing 1,256 individuals cannot sensibly be classed as temporary. It amounts to a substantial strategic project and ought to be judged on that basis.

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5. Purpose of This Objection

This letter sets out my formal objection to the application referenced above. My viewpoint stems from my status as someone living in the Bicester locality. Even though Cherwell District Council does not have the power to decide this case, MHCLG is required to take account of public representations under the Urgent Crown Development rules. The effects of this scheme reach far outside the site boundary and will touch many surrounding communities, among them Bicester, Arncott, Piddington, Launton, Ambrosden, and others.

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6. Conclusion

In light of:

- The outstanding planning harms flagged by Cherwell District Council
- The lack of critical information
- The unsustainable character of the site location
- The considerable consequences for neighbouring communities
- The risks to the environment, infrastructure, and local amenity

- The deficiencies in the consultation process

I respectfully ask that MHCLG REFUSE application 26/01833/CROWN.
The scheme is brought forward too early, lacks adequate supporting evidence, causes harm to the environment, imposes an unfair burden on society, and does not align with sound strategic planning.