

Dear Secretary of State

Re: Application reference: PCU/RARE/C3105/3378843

Site: Site A, MOB Bicester

I write on behalf of Langford Village Community Association Bicester who represent 5,500 residents of Langford Village. We are an elected body to represent the community on topics which affect us.

We ask that planning permission be refused, on the following grounds:

- **Lack of Electricity and other utilities:**
  The application has demonstrated that there are many issues regarding the utilities for the site. Electricity is in short supply in Bicester currently, with power outages happening regularly across Bicester. (Confirmed with Bicester Electrical companies) Other large-scale developments e.g. Wretchwick Green, have been delayed due to lack of utilities capacity, in particular electricity. The application states generators will be used, that brings with it noise and pollution issues, which does not meet the standards required from an ecological perspective. The utilities required for 1,256 men plus staff are significant and have not been assessed in detail in the application, nor any permanent solution found for the electricity shortage.

  "Due to the current uncertainties regarding available power within the network, the current proposal assumes that the existing electrical infrastructure cannot be relied upon, and therefore temporary and/or permanent generator provision shall be incorporated to support the development."

- **Asbestos Present on site:**
  There is asbestos in the buildings, and require demolition before this project could realistically commence. This will make the project extremely expensive and with a longer timescale, due to the care required to remove the asbestos safely.

  "The site is part of a former Defence Storage and Distribution Centre, known as Site A. The site was used as a large-scale military storage facility with Nissen huts and various warehouses. The majority of the existing buildings onsite, particularly the large warehouses, contain asbestos and are deemed to be dangerous, unstable structures and require demolition"

- **Lack of Water Supply**:
  The plan recognises and comments on, that fresh water is an issue, for the development that is proposed. There is no indication of the quantity of fresh water required and the ability to obtain it. It will be a large amount for showers, toilets, clothes washing, cooking, washing up cleaning and drinking water. There is mention of bringing in tankers, this is not an acceptable solution for 10 years occupation and does not meet planning laws regarding a development.

  "A site wide Mains water network is available and is currently in limited use. Record information implies that the Site Network is Private. Site Inspection suggests that the site network is of limited capacity relative to any concentrated development."

- **Lack of Fire Risk Planning**:
  There are many gaps in the planning application regarding fire evacuation procedures, with no fire hydrants available on site, they would need to be installed

  "*Lack of Information 8.2 Space Separation Operation Nettlefire MOD015- RIBA 2 Fire Safety Strategy May 2026 | UK0045137.3823 Due to the current lack of information at this stage, accurate fire engineering judgements cannot be made for all buildings As the layout and height of individual buildings is currently unknown, space separation calculations are unable to be undertaken and therefore the requirements for spacing between buildings or the minimum unprotected area of building elevations is currently unknown."*

- **Ecology**
  The ecology report contained in the application is incomplete, there are many species in and around the site with many on the 'red list'. The lighting associated with the proposal will have a devastating impact on the local wildlife, (there are several rare species of bat), as the area will be lit 24hours a day.

  "The site comprises areas of neutral grassland, hedgerows and scrub with several buildings and structures (including associated access roads). A brick reservoir, disused railway track and ditch are also present on site. The habitats on site have the potential to support several protected and notable species such as badger, hazel dormouse, water vole, breeding and nesting birds, Great Crested Newt (GCN), reptiles and notable invertebrates. The GLTA undertaken on site found 13 trees with features suitable to host roosting bats. Buildings on site were also considered suitable for roosting bats. The site is located within the SSSI impact zone for Arncott Bridge Meadows SSSI (located 1.82km from site). Consultation with Natural England may be required due to potential presence of impact pathways between the site and Arncott Bridge Meadows SSSI. Due to the presence of suitable habitats on site, targeted protected species surveys for hazel dormouse, breeding/nesting birds, Barn Owl, GCN, reptiles and terrestrial invertebrates are required. Pre-construction checks for water vole and badger are also recommended. Should works involve tree removal, or disturbance works within 20 m of trees identified as having bat roost potential or if works are likely to impact to suitable buildings on site, further bat surveys will be required to fully inform licensing and mitigation requirements. The site also offers high-foraging suitability for bats; therefore, activity surveys are recommended"

- **Ground Contamination**:
  There are particular concerns that ground contamination has not been fully investigated. Previous land-quality work identified potential contamination issues, yet no borehole investigation has been carried out to resolve those risks.

- **Flooding high Risk**
  There are also significant flooding and drainage concerns. Parts of the site are at high risk of surface-water flooding and aspects of the drainage strategy remain unresolved.

- **Transport**
  The transport evidence also raises serious questions. The Transport Assessment repeatedly refers to the wrong road, while the B4011 serving the site has limited pedestrian infrastructure. Any residents would be at high risk as there are no pavements along the B4011 should they leave the site on foot

- **Isolated site**:
  The site is in a very isolated area and not in keeping with the small village it abuts (350 residents). The infrastructure is not adequate for such a large development.

The application states it is for 1,256 men who will spend an average of 90 days there, which would mean the population would turn over four times a year for 10years, making a total of 50,240 (1,256 x 4times annually x 10 years) during that period which is greater than the population of Bicester, all next to a village of 350

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (CDC, 2015)

The CLP sets out the long-term spatial vision for the district and contains policies to help deliver the vision. The spatial vision for how CDC manages the growth of the district can be summarised as: • Focusing the bulk of the proposed growth in and around Bicester and Banbury. ***• Limiting growth in our rural areas and directing it towards larger and more sustainable villages. • Aiming to strictly control development in open countryside***

- **Heritage:**
  There has been no proper on the ground surveys undertaken regarding any remains particularly Roman, of which there is a high probability

  "There is considered to be a high potential for archaeological remains of Roman date to be present within the application site. The application site is located close to several known Roman sites: the Roman town of Alchester, approximately 7km west-north-west, the route of the Romano-British Akeman Street (approximately 2.4km north), and the large quantity of Samian Ware recovered during the construction of one of the warehouses on site in the early 1940s"

- **Costs:**
  The costs to develop this site are immense, as it has never been an accommodation site, has there been a cost/ benefit analysis to turn this into an accommodation site?

- **Previous Application:**
  This site has also previously been considered for asylum accommodation. A smaller proposal was refused by an independent Planning Inspector before subsequently being cancelled. Nothing has changed since that application.

Conclusion:

Taking all these highlighted areas of the planning application together, we do not believe the applicant has demonstrated that Site A is a suitable location for a development of this scale, and would not pass under normal planning process.

We therefore respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]