Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP,
Secretary of State for Housing,
Communities and Local
Government Home Secretary
Home Office
Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DP

Bicester Town Council Offices
The Garth
Launton Road
Bicester
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BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

Dear Home Secretary,

Formal response from Bicester Town Council – Grant of planning permission for MOD Bicester Site A (PCU/ RARE/C3105/3378843)

I write on behalf of Bicester Town Council to formally express the Council's extreme disappointment at your decision to grant full planning permission, under the Urgent Crown Development procedure, for the temporary use of MOD Bicester Site A as non-detained asylum accommodation for up to 1,256 people.

This decision was taken despite the Council's formal objection, the clear and consistent concerns raised by neighbouring communities (including Piddington Parish Council), Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, and the very large number of representations submitted by local residents. The use of the Urgent Crown Development route has bypassed the normal local planning process and the scrutiny that a proposal of this scale and sensitivity would ordinarily receive.

Bicester Town Council has engaged constructively and in good faith throughout this process. We set out a formal holding position and detailed request for information on 14 July 2026, followed by further correspondence on 27 July, 3 August and 7 September 2026. We subsequently submitted a formal objection to the planning application. Throughout, we have highlighted serious and well-founded concerns regarding:

- the fundamental suitability of the site for a residential population of this scale;
- infrastructure capacity (including water, wastewater, electricity and telecommunications);
- access, transport and highway impacts;
- community safety and the management of a large non-detained facility in close proximity to existing communities;
- environmental and ecological impacts;
- the lack of meaningful and timely consultation with local authorities and residents; and
- the absence of clear, binding assurances on mitigation, monitoring and ongoing engagement.

These issues have not been adequately addressed. The decision to proceed in the face of such widespread and evidence-based local opposition undermines confidence in the process and in the principle of local democratic accountability.

The Town Council therefore requests clear, written assurances on the following points:

1. How the outstanding concerns relating to site suitability, infrastructure capacity, transport and community safety will be resolved before any occupation takes place.
2. The precise mechanisms for ongoing consultation and multi-agency working with Bicester Town Council, Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police and local communities.
3. The arrangements for monitoring impacts and the process by which any adverse effects will be mitigated.
4. Confirmation of the temporary nature of the permission and the criteria that will govern any future review or extension.

Bicester Town Council remains committed to constructive engagement. However, we are clear that this decision does not have the support of the local community and that the concerns we have raised remain unresolved. We will continue to represent the interests of Bicester and the surrounding area and will keep residents fully informed.

I would be grateful for a substantive response to the points raised above at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Canning
Deputy Town Clerk
Bicester Town Council