



Pre Inquiry Note – Campsfield IRC

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 293D application)

Dated: Friday 4 September 2026

Application Reference No: CROWN/2026/0000004

Applicant: Home Office

Local Planning Authority: Cherwell District Council

Proposal description: *'Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved (except for access) for the expansion of Campsfield IRC comprising the development of new accommodation blocks and ancillary supporting accommodation, the conversion of existing site infrastructure, demolition of existing structures, creation of additional car parking, landscaping and associated site infrastructure.'*

Site address: Campsfield Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), Evenlode Crescent, Kidlington OX5 1GN

Inquiry date: Opening @ 10:00 on Tuesday 6 October 2026

Inspector: Mr C Parker, BA(Hons) PGCert MA FRGS MRTPI IHBC

*The Town and Country Planning (Crown Development Applications)
(Hearings and Inquiries) Rules 2025
The Town and Country Planning (Crown Development Applications)
(Procedure and Written Representations) Order 2025*

The planning file can be found here: [CROWN/2026/0000004 - Application information – Find a Crown development application](#)

Cherwell District Council, the Local Planning Authority, object to the proposal. Reasons include *'unless and until the Secretary of State is satisfied that:*

- *the national and operational need is robustly demonstrated;*
- *the Green Belt and Grey Belt tests are met;*
- *all transport, parking, infrastructure, security, policing, community, safeguarding, detainee risk differentiation and Technology Park impacts are satisfactorily resolved;*
- *and every necessary mitigation measure is secured through enforceable conditions and binding obligations.'*

Kidlington Town Council, Object to the proposal.

Oxford City Council, a nearby local authority, Object to the proposal.

The local **Member of Parliament** (MP), Calum Miller (Bicester and Woodstock), and nearby MP Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon) Object to the proposal.

Rule 13 Parties

No parties have requested or sought Rule 13 status under Rule 13(4).

Interested Parties

Around 260 interested parties have submitted comments and/or objections to the outline planning application under consideration.

The primary areas or topics of concern include:

- The lack of transparency with the application being the subject of a security Direction meaning a number of documents are redacted.
- Whether the need (increasing capacity by around 240 places) has been demonstrated.
- The lack of justification as to why the site comprises grey belt within the Green Belt designation.
- The potential urbanising effect of the proposal – including the potential maximum height of around 16 metres compared to the existing height of buildings of around 9.4 metres.
- The impact on neighbouring occupiers including in terms of light pollution and loss of privacy.
- The potential impact in terms of flooding within Kidlington.
- The effect of the proposal on traffic within the local area.
- The potential impact on inhabitants of the IRC in respect of matters such as their mental health, humanitarian harms, and the operation of any facility, the impact on Human Rights.

Main Issues

1. Having regard to the application submissions, the consultation responses and comments – from statutory consultees, the local community and interested parties more widely - the Council's report and resolution, the main issues for this outline application at this stage are:
 - i Whether or not the need for increasing capacity at the site has been demonstrated.
 - ii What justification there is, or not, that the site comprises 'grey belt' within a Green Belt designation.

And if so, whether or not it has been demonstrated that the benefits from the proposal justify the proposal.

Lastly, if the proposal is 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt, what very special circumstances exist which justify the loss of openness and/or permanence which could result from the proposal.
 - iii The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.
 - iv The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers; including in terms of light pollution and loss of privacy.
 - v The effect of the proposal on the local traffic network.
 - vi The potential effect of the proposal on inhabitants of the IRC in respect of matters such as their mental health, humanitarian harms, and the operation of any facility, the impact on Human Rights.
 - vii Whether or not the application makes adequate provision for infrastructure.
2. The Secretary of State has exercised the powers conferred by legislation through a Security Direction, directing that the information identified in Annex A¹ is to be treated as 'sensitive information' for the purposes of section 293H(7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
3. The observations made by interested parties regarding the redacted information are noted, including concerns about transparency in the decision-making process and the inability to view and comment on information that is subject to the Security Direction. However, the appointed Inspector, like all parties to the Inquiry, is required to comply with the terms of the Security Direction.

¹ [260602 Annex A - Secretary of State Direction - Sensitive Information Application Documents](#)

4. The Security Direction does not prevent interested parties from raising concerns or making observations on matters arising from the proposal, including, for example, its potential effects on the local traffic network. Nor does it prevent the Applicant from responding to those concerns. To assist the Inquiry, parties are encouraged to answer questions put to them by the Inspector, while remaining mindful of the restrictions imposed by the Security Direction.
5. It is not the Inspector's intention to hold any closed sessions under powers such as section 321 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. All Inquiry sessions are therefore expected to be held in public in accordance with the Inquiry Rules. Parties should prepare and present their cases on that basis.

Outline Agenda for Inquiry²

i) **Introductions by the Inspector and advocates/spokespersons**

Notes:

This refers to the principal parties – the Applicant, the LPA, and statutory parties.

Typically the openings should take no more than 30 minutes. Briefly setting out the cases for those parties.

ii) **Interested parties provide oral evidence**

Notes:

The Inspector will set out an order of appearances for interested parties. Therefore, it is **important for you to register before the Inquiry opens** using the details below.

Typically the Town/Parish Council will be the first party to provide oral evidence, should they wish to (they will have **10 minutes** to present their views).

You should note that the representations submitted during the consultation period have been read. Therefore it is not necessarily beneficial to have such points repeated orally.

It can help for oral evidence to be provided in bullet points in paper copy version at the event, with an electronic copy sent to the email below.

To ensure all those wishing to provide oral evidence can do so, at the Inspector's discretion, any interested party should plan for a speaking time of **three minutes** per interested party. Whilst this is recognised as limited, this is in excess of the total of five minutes afforded to each group of speakers by the LPA for Planning Committee³.

You may find it helpful to co-ordinate your respective cases through the nomination of a spokesperson. In these cases, where a spokesperson is representing a number of people or parties, the Inspector may provide them with a longer time period in which to present their case.

All time limits set out above are subject to the Inspector's discretion, in accordance with the Inquiry Rules.

The Inspector is keen that all parties taking part have an opportunity to present their respective cases – and much of this has already occurred with the

² The procedure is governed by Rule 21.

³ [Planning Committee Procedure Rules - Cherwell District Council](#)

submission of written representations. At the same time, Inquiry time is finite and the aim is to ensure that it is used as effectively as possible in order to assist the decision-maker.

Parties attending the Inquiry should also be aware that the Inspector has powers to require disruptive parties to leave, should this need arise. To that end, all parties should treat each other with respect and also respect the Inquiry process. Ultimately, the aim of the Inquiry process is to assist the decision-maker by ensuring that all parties positively contribute to it; providing their views and helping the Inquiry 'test' the evidence.

- iii) **The LPA, Cherwell District Council, presents its case; with cross-examination from the Applicant and/or questions from the Inspector.**
- iv) **The Applicant presents its case; with cross-examination from the LPA and/or questions from the Inspector.**
- v) **Consideration of planning obligations/s106 matters.**
- vi) **Consideration of suggested conditions.**
- vii) **Closing submissions by principal parties.**

All parties should continue to work together so as to narrow the issues wherever possible.

Register to speak as interested party

Should you wish to speak as an interested party, please ensure that you register with the Case Officer at the Crown Development Applications Team at:

crownapplications@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

before midday on Friday 2 October 2026.

Costs

All parties should be aware that, in some circumstances, costs can be applied for, and awarded, in relation to Crown Development Applications.

Further details of this can be found at:

www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals/guidance

Whilst this refers to appeals, similar principles apply to Crown Development Applications.

Such situations may arise where one party considers another party has acted unreasonably in the lead up to or during the Inquiry, and in acting unreasonably this has caused unnecessary or wasted expense on the party making the application for costs. It is not an opportunity to recover general costs on the basis that you support or oppose the scheme, and / or the costs that you have incurred in supporting your case at or leading up to the Inquiry. The general expectation is that parties will cover their own costs in participating in the process.

Additionally, you should be aware that the appointed Inspector may, on their own initiative, make an award of costs, in full or in part, if they judge that a party has behaved unreasonably resulting in unnecessary application expense.

C Parker
INSPECTOR