

COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Cherwell

Application no: CROWN/2026/0000004

Proposal: Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved (except for access) for the extension of the Campsfield Immigration Removal Centre comprising: erection of Accommodation Blocks; Care and Separation Unit (CASU); Gate House; Visitors' Reception; Faith Building; Escorts' Rest Area; re-use of modular buildings; installation of lighting columns; replacement of security fencing and CCTV; installation of 2m fence along car park boundary; erection of internal zonal fencing; use of existing access/egress and creation of internal roads; rearrangement of existing car parking and creation of additional parking for staff and visitors; associated groundworks and landscaping; demolition of existing structures; and installation of roof top solar PV panels.

Location: Campsfield House IRC, Langford Lane, Kidlington, OX5 1RE

Response Date: 24/07/2026

This report sets out the officer views of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) on the above proposal. These are set out by individual service area/technical discipline and include details of any planning conditions or Informatives that should be attached in the event that permission is granted and any obligations to be secured by way of a S106 agreement. Where considered appropriate, an overarching strategic commentary is also included. If the local County Council member has provided comments on the application these are provided as a separate attachment.

Application no: CROWN/2026/0000004

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General Information and Advice

Recommendations for approval contrary to OCC objection:

If within this response an OCC officer has raised an objection, but the Local Planning Authority are still minded recommending approval, OCC would be grateful for notification (via planningconsultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk) as to why material consideration outweighs OCC's objections, and to be given an opportunity to make further representations.

Outline applications and contributions

The anticipated number and type of dwellings and/or the floor space may be set by the developer at the time of application which is used to assess necessary mitigation. If not stated in the application, a policy compliant mix will be used. The number and type of dwellings used when assessing S106 planning obligations is set out on the first page of this response.

In the case of outline applications, once the unit mix/floor space is confirmed by reserved matters approval/discharge of condition a matrix (if appropriate) will be applied to establish any increase in contributions payable. A further increase in contributions may result if there is a reserved matters approval changing the unit mix/floor space.

Where a S106/Planning Obligation is required:

- **Index Linked** – in order to maintain the real value of S106 contributions, contributions will be index linked. Base values and the index to be applied are set out in the Schedules to this response.
- **Administration and Monitoring Fee**

A fee to cover the cost of monitoring and administration associated with the S106 agreement will be secured in the S106 agreement. The fees for the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 are set out below. The fees are revised annually and approved by Cabinet.

Aggregate of contributions secured in S106	Up to £10K	Up to £25K	£25,001 - £50K	£50,001 - £150K	£150,001 - £500K	£500,001 - £1m	£1,000,001 - £2m	Over £2m
Admin and Monitoring Fee	£158	£390	£765	£2,310	£5,680	£7,675	0.945% of aggregate of contribution amount	£18,900 + 0.1% of any amount over £2m

- **OCC Legal Fees** The applicant will be required to pay OCC's legal fees in relation to legal agreements. Please note the fees apply whether a S106 agreement is completed or not.

Security of payment for deferred contributions - Applicants should be aware that an approved bond will be required to secure a payment where a S106 contribution is to be paid post implementation and

- the contribution amounts to 25% or more (including anticipated indexation) of the cost of the project it is towards and that project cost £7.5m or more
- the developer is direct delivering an item of infrastructure costing £7.5m or more
- where aggregate contributions towards bus services exceeds £1m (including anticipated indexation).

A bond will also be required where a developer is direct delivering an item of infrastructure.

The County Infrastructure Funding Team can provide the full policy and advice, on request.

Application no: CROWN/2026/0000004

Location: Campsfield House IRC, Langford Lane, Kidlington, OX5 1RE

Transport Schedule

Recommendation: Objection for the following reasons:

- Lack of sufficient information making it difficult to reach an informed view of the development's impact on the local highway network in line with NPPF (109 (c))

If despite OCC's objection permission is proposed to be granted, then OCC requires prior to the issuing of planning permission a s106 agreement including an obligation to enter into a s278 agreement to mitigate the impact of the development plus planning conditions and informatives as detailed below.

S106 Contributions

Contribution	Amount £	Price base	Index	Towards (details)
Public transport services	TBC	TBC	RPI-x	Bus service enhancements on the Langford Lane / A44 corridor
Travel Plan Monitoring	3,430	April 2026	RPI-x	Monitoring the Travel Plan for a period of 5 years
Total				

Other obligations:

- Off-site highway works – footway/crossing works on Langford Lane

Comments:

The Transport Assessment (TA) has been heavily redacted. As it stands, the Local Highway Authority's response considers it impossible to fully assess the impact of the proposed development in its redacted form. We will update the response once we have received the unredacted TA and appendices.

Access arrangements

Access to the IRC is currently provided via Evenlode Crescent and this shall be maintained. Evenlode Crescent is circa 5.2m wide and is a private road which links onto Langford Lane which benefits from a series of pedestrian enhancements – about to be delivered through s278 works from recently approved developments. These improvements have transformed the route into a more accessible and welcoming environment, with a continuous footway along the eastern side of the street, lighting and clear connections to the wider pedestrian network.

Site layout and Parking

This type of land use/facility is not specifically referenced within the County Council's parking standards. As such, the level of car and cycle parking provision should be limited to that which is demonstrably necessary to meet the site's operational requirements, including adequate provision for both staff and visitors, while taking account of the anticipated modal share and opportunities for travel by sustainable modes.

There are conflicting views on the level of parking provision. While the TA states 314 spaces, the Planning Statement suggests up to 325 car parking spaces shall be provided from the existing 97 spaces. This discrepancy needs to be clarified. Again, the TA states that up to 267 parking spaces are proposed, comprising 238 staff spaces, 16 visitor spaces and 13 blue badge spaces. However, no robust justification has been provided within the submitted TA to demonstrate that this level of provision is necessary or appropriate. It is possible that the relevant supporting evidence has been redacted, but in its current form the submission does not enable a proper assessment of the proposed parking quantum.

Cycle parking should be provided at a generous level to encourage and accommodate future growth in cycling. All cycle parking facilities should be secure, covered, conveniently located, and designed in accordance with current best practice standards to ensure they are attractive and practical for users.

The TA states that up to 41 cycle parking spaces will be provided within a secure cycle store for both staff and visitors. Whilst the principle is supported, it is not possible to determine the proposed location of the cycle store from the submitted plans, as the relevant detail appears to have been redacted. As a result, the suitability and accessibility of the proposed cycle parking provision cannot be assessed.

To further strengthen sustainable travel opportunities, the proposal introduces a new pedestrian crossing on Langford Lane, creating a safer and more convenient link to the nearby bus stop on the opposite side of the carriageway. This measure reflects a positive commitment to improving connectivity and encouraging active travel. The applicant has confirmed that the proposal has been discussed with the Local Highway Authority, and the Council supports the principle of this enhancement, subject to the detailed technical approval of OCC through a s278.

Traffic impact

Due to the redacted nature of the Transport Assessment, it has not been possible to establish the total trip generation associated with the site, including both existing and proposed staff and visitor trips. The information available is limited to Tables 6.5 and 6.12, which present the existing and proposed visitor trip generation respectively.

Based on the information provided in both tables, it is assumed that the reason the total daily visitor trip generation remains unchanged at 40 trips, despite the proposed expansion of the facility, is that visitor numbers will continue to be managed through a

pre-booking system. However, this assumption cannot be verified from the submitted documentation, and further clarification should be provided to confirm how visitor demand will be controlled and maintained despite the expansion of the facility; and whether no increase in overall staff-related trips is anticipated.

Staff-related trip generation has not been provided. Based on the proposed level of parking provision and anticipated staffing levels, staff travel is likely to represent the most significant source of trip demand associated with the development. In the absence of detailed information on employee numbers, mode share assumptions, staff origins, and anticipated arrival and departure profiles, it is not possible to robustly assess the scale or distribution of these movements.

Furthermore, owing to the proposed shift patterns, movements associated with shift changes are likely to create concentrated peaks in demand over relatively short periods. This could result in localised impacts on the surrounding highway network, access arrangements, and nearby junctions, particularly where multiple staff arrive or depart simultaneously. Additional information regarding staff numbers per shift, shift change timings, expected travel modes, and any proposed travel demand management measures would be required to fully understand and assess these potential transport impacts.

Travel Plan

The proposed pedestrian crossing on Langford Lane is welcomed. The expansion of the site will mean an increase in staff numbers – 432 staff. The site will be operational 24/7 and visiting hours will be 9am – 9pm seven days a week.

A Full Travel Plan will be required for this development. This should be produced prior to first occupation of the extension, meet the criteria contained within appendix 5 of the OCC guidance document 'Transport for New Developments – Transport Assessments and Travel Plans March 2014 and then be updated within 3 months of occupation of the extension.

An 'Outline Travel Plan' has been submitted in support of this application but requires further information to meet OCC criteria. Further information regarding the required criteria can be found with the OCC guidance document or by contacting the Travel Plans Team travelplan@oxfordshire.gov.uk

As the site is currently operational, the travel plan should contain information about current travel modes to and from the site (staff and visitors) and any barriers to the promotion of sustainable, active travel modes.

Construction Traffic Management Plan

Construction traffic is considered a more sensitive issue in this location. The proposed construction period of approximately 18 months is expected to generate both HGV movements and workforce traffic. While the submitted Outline CTMP includes a framework Plan, the proximity of residential properties on Evenlode Crescent, together

with the existing traffic conditions on Langford Lane, means that careful management of construction-related traffic will be essential. Accordingly, the submission and approval of a detailed CTMP should be secured by planning condition.

Heads of Terms

The submitted draft heads of terms refer to: Travel Plan measures; a public transport and active travel contribution; and monitoring fees payable to OCC. These heads of terms are appropriate in principle and align with the transport impacts that may arise from the proposed development.

S278 Highway Works:

An obligation to enter into a S278 Agreement will be required to secure mitigation/improvement works.

Notes: This is to be secured by means of s106 restriction not to implement development (or occasionally other trigger point) until s278 agreement has been entered into. The trigger by which time s278 works are to be completed shall also be included in the s106 agreement.

Identification of areas required to be dedicated as public highway and agreement of all relevant landowners will be necessary in order to enter into the S278 agreements.

Planning Conditions:

In the event that permission is to be given, the following planning conditions should be attached:

Travel Plan

Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, a Travel Plan, prepared in accordance with the Department of Transport's Best Practice Guidance Note "Using the Planning Process to Secure Travel Plans", shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented and operated in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - In the interests of sustainability and to ensure a satisfactory form of development, in accordance with Government guidance contained within the NPPF.

CTMP

Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved CTMP.

Reason - In the interests of highway safety and the residential amenities of Neighbouring occupiers and to comply with Government guidance contained within the NPPF.

Officer's Name: [REDACTED]

Officer's Title: TDM Technical Lead (Cherwell Area)

Date: 22 July 2026

Application no: CROWN/2026/0000004

Location: Campsfield House IRC, Langford Lane, Kidlington, OX5 1RE

Lead Local Flood Authority

Recommendation:

Holding objection

Detailed comments:

Much of the technical detail is redacted, so we cannot comment on the suitability of the proposals.

Two drainage strategies are proposed, one relying on infiltration to ground and one relying on attenuation with a restricted discharge to an unknown (due to redaction) receptor. Groundwater has previously been recorded to be very high, which means that infiltration may not be viable.

There is insufficient information available to support the infiltration approach, and long term groundwater level monitoring has been proposed to address this. The monitoring programme must record the peak level through the winter/spring period. Infiltration testing is also required at the appropriate locations and depths for proposed infiltration features.

The second approach has been proposed in the absence of sufficient data to support the infiltration approach. Too much information has been redacted to assess the suitability of this.

Officer's Name: [REDACTED]

Officer's Title: Team Leader – SuDs and Surface Water

Date: 15/07/2026

Application no: CROWN/2026/0000004

Location: Campsfield House IRC, Langford Lane, Kidlington, OX5 1RE

Archaeology

Recommendation:

No objection subject to conditions.

Detailed comments:

The site lies in an area of archaeological interest and potential, in an area which has a range of features recorded in recent archaeological investigations. c. 550m to the southeast of the proposal site, cropmarks depicting probably late prehistoric settlement remains were recorded. These have been investigated as part of a recent archaeological evaluation and were found to contain Iron Age pottery. An extensive geophysical survey has been undertaken on land to the west of the proposal site, including the parcel to the immediate west. 800m to the west of the site, this geophysical survey recorded a possible stone building of Roman date. In the field to the immediate west of the site, the survey recorded agricultural activity.

Conditions:

We would, therefore, recommend that, should planning permission be granted, the applicant should be responsible for ensuring the implementation of a staged programme of archaeological investigation to be maintained during the period of construction. This can be ensured through the attachment of a suitable negative condition along the lines of:

1. Prior to any demolition and the commencement of the development a professional archaeological organisation acceptable to the Local Planning Authority shall prepare an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation, relating to the application site area, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To safeguard the recording of archaeological matters within the site in accordance with the NPPF (2024).

2. Following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition 1, and prior to any demolition on the site and the commencement of the development (other than in accordance with the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation), a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The programme of work shall include all

processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within two years of the completion of the archaeological fieldwork.

Reason – To safeguard the identification, recording, analysis and archiving of heritage assets before they are lost and to advance understanding of the heritage assets in their wider context through publication and dissemination of the evidence in accordance with the NPPF (2024).

Officer's Name: Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services

Officer's Title: Planning Archaeologist

Date: 22/06/2026

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Cherwell

Application no: CROWN/2026/0000004

Proposal: Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved (except for access) for the extension of the Campsfield Immigration Removal Centre comprising: erection of Accommodation Blocks; Care and Separation Unit (CASU); Gate House; Visitors' Reception; Faith Building; Escorts' Rest Area; re-use of modular buildings; installation of lighting columns; replacement of security fencing and CCTV; installation of 2m fence along car park boundary; erection of internal zonal fencing; use of existing access/egress and creation of internal roads; rearrangement of existing car parking and creation of additional parking for staff and visitors; associated groundworks and landscaping; demolition of existing structures; and installation of roof top solar PV panels.

Location: Campsfield House IRC, Langford Lane, Kidlington, OX5 1RE

LOCAL MEMBER VIEWS

Cllr: [REDACTED]

Division: Woodstock

Comments:

It is not clear from what is being proposed to what extent as in the numbers and accommodation this is being provided for and in addition whether this impacts on security of the site. Some clarity on this is needed

Date: 12/06/2026

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Cherwell

Application no: CROWN/2026/0000004

Proposal: Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved (except for access) for the extension of the Campsfield Immigration Removal Centre comprising: erection of Accommodation Blocks; Care and Separation Unit (CASU); Gate House; Visitors' Reception; Faith Building; Escorts' Rest Area; re-use of modular buildings; installation of lighting columns; replacement of security fencing and CCTV; installation of 2m fence along car park boundary; erection of internal zonal fencing; use of existing access/egress and creation of internal roads; rearrangement of existing car parking and creation of additional parking for staff and visitors; associated groundworks and landscaping; demolition of existing structures; and installation of roof top solar PV panels.

Location: Campsfield House IRC, Langford Lane, Kidlington, OX5 1RE

LOCAL MEMBER VIEWS

Cllr:



Division: Kidlington East

Comments:

Objection

Introduction

I strongly object to the proposed expansion of Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) through the provision of an additional 240 detention places. This objection is based on clear planning, transport, economic, environmental and public-interest grounds, and on the failure of the application to demonstrate either a proven need for the development or its compatibility with the established planning framework for the area.

The proposal conflicts with the development plan, including the Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031, is inconsistent with the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) 2022–2050, and fails to accord with key provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024).

Furthermore, significant deficiencies in the submitted information prevent meaningful public scrutiny and make a fully informed planning assessment impossible.

1. Need for Additional Detention Capacity Has Not Been Proven

The Government's justification for this proposal rests upon an assertion that additional immigration detention accommodation is required. However, no convincing evidence has been provided to support this claim.

The Government's own detention statistics for March 2026 indicate that **651 detention places were vacant out of approximately 2,356 available places nationwide**, representing more than one-quarter of the existing estate. The existence of substantial unused capacity fundamentally undermines the argument that a further 240 places at Campsfield House are necessary.

Equally significant is the fact that the majority of detainees released from immigration detention do not leave the United Kingdom. Government data indicates that approximately **56% of individuals leaving detention remain in the UK**, raising serious questions about the effectiveness and necessity of detention itself.

In these circumstances, the claimed "national importance" of the proposal is not evidenced. The Planning Inspectorate should attach limited weight to assertions of need that are unsupported by robust evidence.

This is particularly important in light of the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development and the requirement that planning decisions contribute to economic, social and environmental objectives in an integrated manner (paragraphs 8–11 of the NPPF). The Government has not demonstrated that this development represents sustainable development when measured against those objectives.

2. The Proposal Is Inappropriate in a Strategic Employment and Innovation Area

The site lies within an area that has been the focus of long-term strategic planning for knowledge-based employment growth associated with:

- Oxford Technology Park
- Begbroke Innovation District
- London Oxford Airport employment corridor
- The wider Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor

The land surrounding Campsfield was removed from the Green Belt specifically to facilitate economic development associated with high-value employment uses. The proposal directly conflicts with the following planning policies:

Cherwell Local Plan Policy SLE1 – Employment Development

Policy SLE1 seeks to support economic growth, innovation, research and development, and high-value employment opportunities. The Langford Lane corridor and adjoining innovation districts form a key component of this strategy.

A secure detention facility cannot reasonably be characterised as the form of high-value employment envisaged by that policy. As former MP Nicola Blackwood observed when considering an earlier Campsfield proposal:

"I cannot see how this Local Plan Policy, calling for higher value employment uses such as high technology industries in the research and development sector, could possibly be interpreted to include employment at an Immigration Removal Facility."

That criticism remains equally valid today.

Policy Kidlington 1

Policy Kidlington 1 promotes:

- Investment in Begbroke Science Park
- The Langford Lane technology corridor
- High-value employment opportunities
- A strong, innovation-led economy

The expansion of a custodial institution in the centre of this strategic employment area is fundamentally at odds with those objectives.

The proposal risks undermining the attractiveness and reputation of neighbouring investment locations. Companies involved in advanced engineering, digital technologies and life sciences seek environments associated with innovation and collaboration. A significantly enlarged detention centre introduces reputational risks and ongoing controversy that may discourage future inward investment.

There is also the likely possibility of sustained and continued demonstrations against the operation of the facility along with disruptions as a result of internal unrest as was demonstrated during the previous period of operation of the facility. None of this is conducive to the character of the area as a high-tech innovation district intended to attract significant overseas investment. As such this runs contrary to the government's stated aim to increase economic growth.

Furthermore, the proposed development site is not genuinely "previously developed employment land." The application itself acknowledges that the land is not currently developed. The proposed three-storey detention block would represent a substantial and incongruous built form and would materially alter the character of the site.

3. Conflict with National Planning Policy on Economic Growth

The NPPF requires planning decisions to support economic growth and productivity.

Paragraph 85 states that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Paragraph 86 requires significant weight to be placed on supporting economic growth and productivity. The proposal does the opposite.

As referenced above, rather than supporting the expansion of strategic employment uses, it sterilises land within one of Oxfordshire's most important innovation corridors with a use that contributes little to the area's economic vision and may actively deter future investment.

The proposal therefore conflicts with both local and national economic development policy.

4. Infrastructure Impacts and Conflict with Strategic Transport Objectives

The development is at odds with the growth assumptions incorporated into Cherwell's adopted and emerging planning frameworks.

The application would impose additional pressures on:

- Langford Lane
- The A44 corridor
- Local junctions
- Public transport services
- Drainage infrastructure
- Water resources
- Wastewater capacity
- Flood management systems

These impacts have not been comprehensively assessed against cumulative growth already planned in the area which is very extensive and only now starting to become evident on the ground.

This is particularly important given:

- Expansion plans at Begbroke Innovation District
- Oxford Technology Park growth
- Major housing allocations as part of the Local Plan Partial Review
- The proposed Oxford United stadium development
- Wider Oxford-Cambridge Corridor growth

Conflict with Oxfordshire LTCP 2022–2050

As a County Councillor I am particularly concerned that the proposal is inconsistent with the objectives of the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022–2050.

The LTCP seeks to:

- Reduce unnecessary motor vehicle trips
- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport
- Support sustainable growth in strategic employment locations
- Reduce congestion and carbon emissions
- Create healthier and more connected communities

The proposed expansion will generate additional staff, contractor, security, visitor and operational vehicle movements while contributing nothing to the delivery of the LTCP's transport transformation objectives.

Instead, it represents a land use that is heavily dependent on vehicle-based operational activity, and which sits awkwardly within an area where transport planning is being shaped around innovation-led development and sustainable movement.

The proposal therefore conflicts with both county transport strategy and NPPF provisions relating to sustainable transport.

Paragraphs 109–118 of the NPPF emphasise that development should provide safe and suitable access, support sustainable transport modes and make effective use of transport infrastructure.

5. Serious Concerns Regarding Redacted Information

The application should not be approved because critical information necessary for proper assessment has been withheld or heavily redacted.

This includes:

- Floor plans
- Operational arrangements
- Detainee movement information
- Parts of the transport assessment

Without access to these documents, local authorities cannot properly assess impacts, residents cannot scrutinise proposals, welfare implications cannot be understood, and transport impacts cannot be independently verified.

Such omissions undermine confidence in the application and frustrate meaningful public participation in the planning process.

6. Unsupported Financial Claims

The application repeatedly suggests that the proposal represents "value for money". No evidence has been provided to support that assertion. No business case, cost-benefit assessment or financial appraisal has been published.

Consequently, the claim carries little or no evidential weight and should be disregarded.

7. Predictable Human Harm and Ongoing Community Impacts

Successive government reviews and independent inspections have confirmed that immigration detention causes significant harm to mental health and wellbeing.

The previous operation of Campsfield was marked by:

- Hunger strikes
- Disturbances
- Escapes
- Acts of self-harm
- Fires
- Deaths

The centre was ultimately closed in 2018 after years of controversy and sustained campaigning.

A large-scale detention facility inevitably generates ongoing protest activity, reputational damage and social tension. Those impacts are material in an area whose future is intended to be based on innovation, research, collaboration and investment.

The proposal therefore conflicts with the social dimension of sustainable development and with NPPF objectives promoting healthy, safe and inclusive communities.

8. Conflict with Design and Landscape Policies

Policy ESD15 – Design

Policy ESD15 requires development to deliver high-quality design that responds positively to local character and context.

A substantial three-storey custodial building surrounded by security infrastructure does not positively contribute to the emerging character of this area as a leading science and technology district.

Policy ESD13 – Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

Policy ESD13 requires conservation and enhancement of landscape character and visual quality.

The proposed development would introduce an institutional and defensive built form that is visually inconsistent with surrounding innovation and business development and the growing residential area.

Policy ESD1 – Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

Policy ESD1 requires developments to contribute to sustainable patterns of growth and reduced carbon impacts.

Given its operational nature and transport demands, the proposal fails to demonstrate alignment with those objectives.

9. Widespread and Sustained Local Opposition

This proposal lacks a social licence to operate.

Opposition has been expressed by:

- Parish councils
- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford City Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- The local Member of Parliament
- All local councillors, including myself
- Community organisations
- Many individual residents

Cherwell District Council passed a motion in 2024, brought by me, opposing the reopening and expansion of Campsfield. The County Council also passed a similar motion.

Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the University of Oxford are all associated with the City of Sanctuary movement, reflecting a markedly different vision for how migrants and asylum seekers should be supported.

The Planning Inspectorate should give substantial weight to this exceptionally broad and sustained local opposition.

10. Better Alternatives Exist

Sir Stephen Shaw's independent reviews concluded that immigration detention is frequently harmful, ineffective and poor value for money.

The subsequent move towards community-based alternatives led directly to the closure of Campsfield and other detention centres.

Evidence from those programmes demonstrated higher engagement rates, lower costs and more humane outcomes.

The Government has failed to explain why those alternatives should now be displaced by a significant expansion of detention capacity.

11. A Further Public Inquiry Is Necessary

Given:

- The scale of local opposition
- Conflict with local planning objectives
- Conflict with strategic employment aspirations
- Significant transport implications
- Landscape and design concerns
- Redacted evidence
- Uncertainty regarding need

it would be inappropriate for the application to proceed to approval without a full and comprehensive public inquiry.

The Crown Development process should not be used to circumvent proper democratic scrutiny where a proposal has such profound implications for the local area.

Conclusion

For all of the reasons set out above, the proposed expansion of Campsfield House:

- Conflicts with **Policy Kidlington 1, SLE1, ESD1, ESD13 and ESD15** of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031;
- Conflicts with the objectives of the **Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022–2050**;
- Conflicts with key provisions of the **National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)** concerning sustainable development, economic growth, transport and design; and

- Fails to demonstrate either a genuine operational need or an acceptable planning justification.
- Flies in the face of evidence that better, cheaper and more humane options are available.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Planning Inspectorate and Secretary of State **refuse planning permission** for the proposed Campsfield House Phase 2 expansion.

Alternatively, the application should be referred to a **full public inquiry** before any determination is made.

Sources

NPPF December 2024; Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031; Kidlington Area Strategy and Policy KID1.

Date: 07/07/2026

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Cherwell

Application no: CROWN/2026/0000004

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Location: Campsfield House IRC, Langford Lane, Kidlington, OX5 1RE

LOCAL MEMBER VIEWS

Cllr: [REDACTED]

Division: Kidlington West

Comments:

While the Home Office has identified a national operational requirement for additional immigration detention accommodation, the application fails to demonstrate that the proposed development satisfies the statutory and policy tests applicable to major development within the Oxford Green Belt.

The Planning Statement and supporting documents place considerable reliance upon assertions of national importance and operational necessity. However, those assertions are not supported by sufficiently detailed planning evidence to justify the substantial permanent expansion of a secure institutional complex within a highly sensitive Green Belt location.

This objection does not challenge the Government's immigration policy. Rather, it addresses whether the proposed development has been demonstrated, through objective planning evidence, to constitute an appropriate form of development in this location and whether the claimed public benefits clearly outweigh the identified planning harm.

It is submitted that the applicant has not discharged that burden.

(i) Failure to demonstrate Very Special Circumstances

The proposal constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Such development is, by definition, harmful and should not be approved except where Very Special Circumstances ("VSC") clearly outweigh both the definitional harm to the Green Belt and any other identified harm. (The site does not meet the definition of Grey Belt as it contributes to the purpose of preventing coalescence between the settlements of Kidlington and Begbroke)

The applicant's case relies principally upon assertions of national operational need and the strategic importance of immigration detention capacity. Whilst these matters are capable of attracting significant weight, the Planning Statement does not adequately explain why the proposed scale of development must occur at Campsfield, why alternative locations have not been selected, or why a development of approximately 400 places represents the minimum necessary intervention.

Accordingly, the evidence presented does not demonstrate that the high policy threshold for Very Special Circumstances has been met.

(ii) Strategic inconsistency with the Cherwell Local Plan

The proposal sits within the Langford Lane corridor, an area where exceptional Green Belt development has previously been supported only where it demonstrably advanced the strategic economic objectives of the Cherwell Local Plan.

Development such as Oxford Technology Park was promoted because it delivered nationally significant economic benefits through high-value employment, research, engineering, aerospace and innovation. Those developments formed part of a coherent spatial strategy intended to strengthen Oxfordshire's internationally recognised knowledge economy.

The proposed expansion of Campsfield House represents an entirely different form of development. It is a large secure institutional use that neither contributes to the strategic employment objectives of the Local Plan nor supports the established innovation cluster surrounding Langford Lane and Oxford Airport.

The Planning Statement does not adequately explain why further Green Belt development within this strategically important corridor should now be supported for a land use fundamentally different from that envisaged by the development plan.

(iii) Harm to the Green Belt and increasing risk of coalescence

The application significantly underestimates the cumulative contribution made by the remaining Green Belt between Oxford, Kidlington and the expanding Langford Lane employment area.

Successive developments have progressively urbanised this corridor. As development has intensified, the strategic importance of the remaining undeveloped land has correspondingly increased.

The proposal would further erode openness, extend the built form of the Immigration Removal Centre and contribute to the incremental consolidation of urban development within the corridor.

Particular concern arises from the limited assessment of the site's continuing contribution towards preventing the coalescence of neighbouring settlements, one of the principal purposes of Green Belt designation.

This issue is especially significant given the planning authority's recent reliance upon similar Green Belt purposes when objecting to the Botley West Solar Farm proposals affecting nearby land.

Whilst each application must be determined on its own merits, consistency in the application of Green Belt policy is an important consideration. The Inspector is respectfully invited to examine whether the Green Belt functions attributed to neighbouring parcels have been assessed consistently in relation to the present proposal.

(iv) Inadequate evidence supporting the claimed national importance and operational need

The Planning Statement repeatedly refers to the national importance of immigration detention capacity and the operational need for additional accommodation.

However, these propositions are presented largely as statements rather than as evidence capable of detailed examination.

In particular, insufficient information is provided regarding:

- the evidential basis for the proposed increase in detention capacity;
- why approximately 400 places are required rather than a smaller expansion;
- the assumptions underpinning future operational demand;
- the extent to which existing Immigration Removal Centres could accommodate forecast demand;
- whether alternative Government-owned sites have been fully evaluated.

Without such evidence it is difficult for the decision-maker properly to assess the weight to be afforded to the claimed public benefits.

(v) Failure adequately to consider reasonable alternatives

The supporting documentation provides limited transparency regarding the assessment of alternative sites and operational options.

Given that Green Belt policy requires particularly compelling justification, it would reasonably be expected that a comprehensive comparative assessment had been undertaken demonstrating why Campsfield represents the optimum location for the proposed expansion.

The absence of such analysis weakens the applicant's case that development on protected Green Belt land is genuinely necessary.

(vi) Deficiencies in the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan

The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan do not appear adequately to assess the cumulative effects of development already committed within the Langford Lane corridor and in the surrounding area.

The surrounding highway network is experiencing sustained growth associated with commercial, employment, housing and infrastructure development, including Oxford Technology Park, Oxford Airport, Begbroke and other allocated sites.

The cumulative impacts of these developments, together with additional staff movements, escort vehicles, servicing traffic, construction traffic and visitor movements associated with the proposed IRC expansion, require particularly careful assessment - and transparency.

The evidence currently presented does not satisfactorily demonstrate that the cumulative transport impacts have been fully considered.

(vii) Outline application creates unnecessary uncertainty

The application seeks outline planning permission with all matters reserved except access.

Consequently, many of the environmental impacts that ordinarily inform the planning balance—including detailed layout, scale, appearance, landscaping, lighting and visual mitigation—remain uncertain.

The Inspector is therefore invited to determine the principle of a substantial expansion without certainty as to its final form.

Whilst outline applications are an established feature of the planning system, the degree of uncertainty remaining in relation to a proposal of this scale and sensitivity materially limits the ability fully to assess the likely planning impacts.

Conclusion

Taken individually, each of the matters identified above raises legitimate questions regarding the adequacy of the applicant's evidence.

Taken collectively, they demonstrate that the application has not established the exceptional planning justification required to support major expansion within the Oxford Green Belt.

The applicant has not adequately demonstrated that:

- the claimed national need requires development at Campsfield;
- reasonable alternatives have been exhausted;

- the proposal is consistent with the strategic objectives of the Cherwell Local Plan;
- the cumulative contribution of the remaining Green Belt has been properly assessed;
- cumulative transport impacts have been robustly evaluated; or
- the public benefits clearly outweigh the substantial harm arising from inappropriate Green Belt development.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the Secretary of State should conclude that the proposal conflicts with national and local planning policy and that planning permission should be refused.

Date: 01/07/2026
