

## **Report on submissions made to the Planning Inspectorate on Crown Development Project to expand Campsfield (6 August 2026)**

The [Planning Inspectorate website](#) records 259 separate submissions made by the 24 July 2026 deadline.

Some 200 submissions were made by individuals.

Only two submissions, both from individuals, support the expansion of Campsfield.

39 submissions came from national/non-Oxon (26) and from Oxfordshire (13) organisations.

The 26 national and non-Oxon submissions from organisations included 7 such as Sport England that were neutral. All 19 others were objections. The list is:

|                                                  |                                |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Active Tavel England                             | National Highways              |
| Amnesty International UK                         | No Detention No Haslar         |
| Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees | No To Hassockfield             |
| Baobab Women's Project CIC                       | One Strong Voice               |
| Building Safety Regulator Planning Gateway One   | Quaker Asylum Refugee Network  |
| Canal and River Trust                            | Rainbow Coalition              |
| Conversation Over Borders                        | Refugee and Migrant Justice    |
| Detention Action                                 | Rene Cassin                    |
| Detention Forum (60 organisations)               | Right to Remain                |
| Global Women Against Deportations                | Scottish Detainee Visitors     |
| Historic England                                 | Social Workers Without Borders |
| Leeds Asylum Seekers' Support Network            | Sport England                  |
|                                                  | Theatre Trust                  |

Of the Oxfordshire organisation submissions (13) all but one (Oxford Archaeological Services) were objections. They include Kidlington town, Cherwell District and Oxfordshire County councils and Oxford Trades Union Council. The list is:

|                                                                       |                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cherwell District Council                                             | Oxford City Council Green Party Group                          |
| Coalition to Close Campsfield (40 organisations)                      | Oxford Renters Union                                           |
| Kai Shinbrough, prospective business tenant of Oxford Technology Park | Oxford Student Action for Refugees                             |
| Kidlington Town Council                                               | Oxfordshire County Council [included in Cherwell's submission] |
| Oxford and District Trades Union Council                              | University and Colleges Union (UCU) Oxford                     |
| Oxford Archaeological Services                                        | Brookes University                                             |
| Oxford City Council                                                   | University and Colleges Union (UCU) Oxford University          |

2 submissions were from MPs Calum Miller, Bicester and Woodstock, and Layla Moran Oxford West and Abingdon), 3 from councillors, and a further 3 from councillors were included in the Cherwell Council submission. All were objections.

Many of the individual submissions are based on pro-forma letters or on hard copy letters which were signed individually and then posted on behalf of the signatories. About 11 of those from Oxfordshire residents are duplicated on the PI website.

At least half (105) of the individual submissions were from Oxfordshire residents. Some of these identified as local residents and some as workers from the Oxford Technology Park next to Campsfield.

### ***Key points made in submissions***

The main point made in almost all of the submissions is to address the government's claim that expansion is required to address a matter of 'national importance: the submissions argue – some at length and in detail - that the 'need' is not established by the applicant.

Nearly all submissions addressed the planning issues of the Green Belt, and the clash with the Local Plan.

Even those that address mainly 'planning' issues were very clear that expansion of detention itself is not the answer.

Several of the local objectors also raised the clash of objectives for this part of Kidlington, namely then government's trumpeted Oxford to Cambridge growth arc and what amounts to a very tall high-security prison.

It is not possible adequately to summarise the submissions, all of which made powerful points. Among notable submissions are those from Amnesty International UK and Rene Cassin. Many other submissions make particularly important contributions, for example those from people who have experienced detention, notably those from Gentjan Lybeshari who was imprisoned in Campsfield this year, and from the Association of Visitors to immigration Detainees; also Baobab Women's Project, Global Women Against Deportations, One Strong Voice.

The bulk of the submissions dealt in more or less detail with the objections made in the joint Coalition to Close Campsfield/Right To Remain submission under the following headings:

1. Green Belt, grey belt and cumulative pressure in the Langford Lane area
2. The need and national importance for the expansion have not been evidenced
3. The proposal conflicts with the adopted development plan.
4. Cumulative infrastructure, transport, services and environmental impacts have not been properly assessed
5. Key information has been withheld
6. The application is silent on the harm this facility causes.
7. The application should be refused or be determined by a public inquiry.

### ***Other concerns contained in the submissions include (in no particular order):***

Since Phase 1 was completed and Campsfield reopened traffic congestion, environmental pressures, and local road behaviour have changed significantly.

It is procedurally unsound to claim that adding 267 parking spaces will have "little impact" when the data used to justify this statement is years out of date.

Severe Loss of Privacy and Residential Amenity: The proposed twostorey gatehouse will sit directly opposite my home.

Sleep disturbance and nighttime operational noise — entirely incompatible with a residential setting. My experience during Phase 1 demonstrates exactly what this means in practice. The noise was relentless.

Completion of Phase 1 has already had a significant negative impact on my mental health. The prospect of a further, more intrusive expansion — without transparency, without current evidence, and without meaningful mitigation — is overwhelming.

The site is at the Western End of the government growth arc (Oxford to Cambridge) of innovative technology business, already has several hundred new houses plans and in addition to the existing Tech parks there is another planning application for Oxford TP2 which will mean Campsfield is an out of place building.

The urgent need is for people to work from that sentencing day to arrange the deportation. Not subject these ex prisoners [only one category of detainees held] to long periods in IRCs.

Extraordinary reversal of previous (2016-19) Government policy, disregards the extensive body of evidence demonstrating the ineffectiveness, wastefulness and human cost of the UK's immigration detention system.

Why are time-served domestic convicts less dangerous to the public good than time-served foreign national convicts? It makes no sense. If the Home Office believes a certain individual to still be a grave danger to the public, the state has an existing (criminal) custodial system.

"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." - former local MP Nicola Blackwood, 2014

Mitie's performance there was described in a 2025 Prison Inspectorate report as 'Drugs, despair and decrepit conditions' providing 'the worst conditions they had seen in immigration detention'.

Campsfield is run for profit by Mitie. This does not benefit our citizens, only shareholders.

Mitie, which runs Campsfield, has been forced to launch an investigation into allegations of racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia and hate speech among staff working in immigration removal centres. [Guardian 11/6/26]

The new University Technology Park extends right up to the fences of the detention centre. It seems inappropriate to have these adjacent uses, particularly given the height of the fences of the centre

It seems like a political move to appease the far right, particularly given that there is a significant lack of evidence supporting their decision.

The Ukraine refugees example – people do not need to be detained!

At Campsfield before it closed in 2019, individuals who were subject to torture by the Taliban were being held indefinitely, and individuals that had lived in the UK their whole life and run local businesses were also being held.

The effect of the 'hostile environment' created by immigration removal centres not only affects those detained, but also contributes to the sense of animosity and defensiveness in the local community.

The application does not properly address this harm or the wider impact of expanding detention capacity at Campsfield.

We are lucky to have skylarks in this area at present, but they are one of the fastest declining bird species in the UK and this development would contribute to their loss.

As a resident of Kidlington who relies on walking and cycling in the green belt for my mental and physical wellbeing, including the management of several long-term health conditions, I am concerned that the expansion would harm the openness of the Green Belt and further urbanise the Langford Lane / A44 corridor.

One of the government's key purposes of detention is to remove people from the UK, but in 2024 only 43% of people leaving detention were returned, a fact which has been under 50% since 2015.

The immense harm of detention is not just to detainees but to families, local communities.

**Genjan Lybeshari:** I am writing to formally register my strongest objection to the proposed expansion of the Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre (Application Reference: CROWN/2026/0000004). I am a former detainee who was held inside Campsfield House IRC for two and a half months, from [redacted] [dates redacted by Planning Inspectorate – are during spring 2026]. I am exposing the severe institutional failures, negligence, and human rights abuses I witnessed and experienced first-hand, which prove this centre is unfit to operate, let alone expand:

1. Inhumane Treatment and Torture: During my stay, I was placed in the separation unit (block) where I was subjected to psychological and physical torture. Staff intentionally activated the water sprinkler system in my room, leaving me drenched under water for long hours.
2. Denial of Critical Medication: While being subjected to the water abuse in the block, staff withheld my life-critical medications, directly endangering my life and physical safety.
3. Severe Medical Negligence: Healthcare inside the facility is practically non-existent. I spent months waiting just to see an optician, with management completely ignoring the residents' healthcare needs.
4. Substandard Food and Retaliation: The center regularly served leftover food from the previous day instead of fresh meals. Furthermore, when I spoke up and told staff that the food was unacceptable, they retaliated by logging me into 'Part C' as being "rude". There is absolutely no real communication with the staff or management.
5. Untrained, Hostile, and Provocative Staff: The staff lack basic training and professional knowledge. Whenever a resident made a request, the management's standard response was simply "I don't know." Furthermore, the guards were actively provocative, hostile, and showed zero regard for safety.
6. Closure of Basic Services: Almost all facilities were shut down during my two and a half months there. Essential services like the gym and the IT room were rarely open, and when they did open, it was never on time.
7. Isolation and Communication Failures: The video link systems used for legal and social visits were broken and did not function, systematically isolating detainees from legal representation and families.
8. Loss of Personal Property: My personal belongings were lost/stolen within the centre due to reckless management.
9. Suppression and Falsification of Complaints: The internal complaints system is a sham. Formal complaints submitted by detainees were completely ignored, unread, and dismissed, while valid verbal feedback regarding conditions was weaponized against us in official logs.

An institution that operates with zero security, untrained staff, and systematically violates the basic human rights of individuals under its care must not be expanded. It must be permanently shut down.

Inappropriate building height (much higher than present buildings on site) and spread and fence height – in Green Belt.

UNHCR's 2023 Alternatives to Detention pilot, for example, provides clear evidence of cheaper, better value alternatives to detention. This is clear evidence that more immigration detention beds are not needed.

I am an Associate Professor in Human Geography at the University of Birmingham and have spent nearly 20 years working and publishing on immigration enforcement, including my recent book chapter Immigration Detention and UK Families in M Peterie (ed.), Immigration Detention and Social Harm. The evidence is clear that detention causes serious, irreversible damage to people.

Local plan is for highly skilled Tech Park jobs not detention centre guards.

Local workers on adjacent Oxford Technology Park site experience already pressure on roads, water, electricity; what proposed would be too much and does not take into account existing local plans and what is already under construction.

Real national need is for better decision making and support earlier on in the immigration journey. Mitie exists primarily to make a profit not to serve – their ‘care’ has a very poor track record in IRCs.

Women hunger strikers in Yarl’s Wood Removal Centre protested being separated from children; denial of healthcare; indefinite detention and a regime of predatory sexual abuse (including racist sexual abuse) by guards. There has never been any accountability for this.

Legal advice in detention, which is supposed by law to be available, often is not and has reached a record low. [July report by Bail for Immigration Detainees]

Witch-hunting of asylum seekers (and Muslim people) fuels racism and racist violence against all people of colour. This has allowed the far right to become more visible and more confident, and that divisiveness is destructive to society and leaves us all less safe.

Using the Crown Development route, which removes the decision from ordinary local determination by Cherwell District Council, is wrong.

The government (Home Office) is effectively asking itself (the Planning and Local Government Ministry via its arm the Planning Inspectorate) if it can do what it wants.

"No-one is illegal" - Lord Alf Dubs at a No To Hassockfield meeting.

LGBTQI+ people held in the UK’s immigration detention estate experience serious harm -homophobia, biphobia and transphobia from detention centre staff and other detained people.

Use of immigration detention has become routine and arbitrary and is excessive, contrary to international human rights standards by which the UK is bound.

The Refugee Convention 1951, which the UK helped to draft and to which it was a founding signatory, outlaws (in Article 31) the criminalisation of refugees based upon their mode of arrival, which is precisely what the Illegal Migration Act does.

The Illegal Migration Act 2023 amounts to a de facto removal of the right to asylum in the UK, since there are no other practical safe and legal routes of entry.

Conditions in immigration detention equate to “inhuman or degrading treatment, if not torture”.

Concerns regarding compliance with fundamental rights protected under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights articles 5 and 8.

Both use of detention and quasi-detention are growing notwithstanding the continued and longstanding unrealistic approach to removals (National Audit Office).

A greater proportion of people detained are held for periods of over a week than at any time since 2010.

Serious expansion of the notion of ‘national security’ in the application to justify expansion.

The Home Office does not need more bedspace. Instead, the department ought to exercise its immigration detention powers more responsibly, purposefully and efficiently.

The application argument is circular: Government wishes to increase removals → therefore more detention is needed → therefore Campsfield must expand → therefore national need outweighs the harm.

Cherwell Council's own pre-application assessment described the issue as finely balanced and emphasised the importance of clear evidence of operational need and alternatives. Both are lacking.

A 400-person detention centre is not simply a larger version of a 160-person centre

Risk of overheating and extreme heat to be a significant and insufficiently addressed aspect of this application.

Applicant fails to demonstrate applicant has demonstrated that the proposed development will provide safe and humane living conditions for people who are compelled to remain within it.

Healthcare services are often under-resourced and access to legal support and contact with friends and family is extremely limited.

High financial cost to the Government and taxpayers, and running the immigration detention estate is projected to cost billions in addition to pay-outs associated with unlawful detention claims (in 2023–24, approximately £12 million).

As a taxpayer, I would be willing to pay increased taxes to fund sustainable programmes for accommodating immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the community.

The expansion proposal is not 'value for money', an assertion it makes. Private-rented dispersal accommodation costs 6 times less.

Incarceration of people who should have been exempt because of their vulnerabilities.

The parish, district, city and county councils have recorded their opposition to the plan, as has the local MP.

41% of those held in detention described feeling unsafe (Campsfield House immigration detention centre detainees 'felt unsafe' - BBC News report on last inspection before closure).

Lack of consideration of alternatives to detention. The government supported pilot projects on alternatives to immigration detention were found to be more cost effective and less harmful than incarceration.

Experience reminds us of the dangers of approaching displaced people primarily through systems of detention and control rather than through dignity, protection and rights (Rene Cassin).

The re-traumatisation of vulnerable people is disproportionate to the stated need for more immigration detention centres.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has specifically warned that expanded use of immigration detention is likely to increase demand on wider mental health services. Which are being cut.

The current or previous uses of the development site relating to sewage works suggest that the land may be affected by contamination (Environment Agency)

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)) (Oxfordshire Council)

It is not possible to make a judgement on the proposal because the relevant information is redacted or not presented (National Highways)

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 (Oxfordshire Council)

Immigration detention is unjust in that decisions to detain are arbitrary, administrative, and without judicial oversight.

No expansion of immigration detention should be undertaken without completion of the planned series of four UNHCR-supported community-based pilot alternatives to detention schemes.

'Slave labour in detention, whereby detainees are paid £1 an hour to work, should not be increased by the expansion of Campsfield.

Expansion of Campsfield is incompatible with the status of both Oxford universities, the City of Oxford, and county of Oxfordshire as a City/County/University of Sanctuary.

Use of the Crown Development route is incompatible with the prime minister's pledge to empower local and regional authorities.

The proposed expansion of Campsfield has not been subject to proper parliamentary scrutiny.

What security reasons can there be to justify redactions in plans which did not happen in the 2014-2015 expansion proposals?

The proposed expansion is on land which was a football field in the days when Campsfield was a young offenders institution. It should be opened up to be used again for recreation while Campsfield remains open, not be built on.

We are lucky to have skylarks in this area at present, but they are one of the fastest declining bird species in the UK and this development would contribute to their loss.

'Campsfield House IRC reopened in December 2025, following its closure in 2018, despite IMB concerns about the expansion of the immigration detention estate – most people are released from detention, and less costly and harmful alternatives exist.' (Independent Monitoring Board's National Annual Report, June 2026)