[redacted]
Asylum Accommodation Delivery Director, Head of the Asylum Accommodation Taskforce
Home Office
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Ministry of Defence
By email: [redacted]@mod.gov.uk

15 December 2025
[redacted]@wealden.gov.uk
www.wealden.gov.uk
01323 443322

Your Ref: MODLA

Dear [redacted]

Crowborough Barracks ("Property")

Thank you for your respective letters of 11 December 2025 responding to the Planning Contravention Notice served on 21 November 2025 in respect of Crowborough Training Camp. We note your confirmation of a Memorandum of Terms of Occupation between the Home Office and the Secretary of State for Defence, and that the Marine Society and Sea Cadets are present on the site.

We also note the response from the Ministry of Defence which states that CCTV has been installed, that no freestanding columns have been erected, that some fencing is present, that no opinion has been sought from Natural England under regulation 76, and that the Home Office has not yet made a decision on the proposed use. It declines to provide camera locations on security grounds.

Your reply declines to answer our questions 11 - 13 and treats several other questions as outside section 171 C. Those questions go to present facts that bear directly on whether permitted development can lawfully be relied upon now. They are not a trawl of future scenarios.

To complete our assessment please provide the following within 7 days:

EIA gateway

1. Confirm whether the Secretary of State has issued any screening direction under the EIA Regulations that relates to a project at Crowborough Training Camp to accommodate asylum seekers. If yes, provide the direction and the material that supported it. If no direction exists, confirm that no request has been made and explain the basis on which screening is said not to be required, with specific reference to our questions 11-13 in the notice.

Habitats Regulations gateway

2. Confirm whether Natural England has been approached for an opinion under regulation 76 on likely significant effects in relation to any project to accommodate asylum seekers at the camp. If yes, provide the request date and the opinion. If no, explain the basis on which no likely significant effects are said to arise, taking account of the Impact Risk Zone for Ashdown Forest and nearby watercourses. The Ministry of Defence letter records that no regulation 76 opinion has been sought and that cameras have been fixed to buildings. We require your position as the occupying department.

Status and scope of any project

3. State whether there is a defined project to accommodate asylum seekers at Crowborough Training Camp for the purposes of the EIA Regulations and the Habitats Regulations. We are not asking for ministerial policy. We are asking whether a project exists on the ground or on paper now. If it does, provide the short project description including the intended period of use.

Relationship with MOD works

4. Confirm whether any of the security works described in our notice were requested by or on behalf of the Home Office, and identify the commencement date and spatial extent of your occupation under the Memorandum of Terms of Occupation. This will fix the line between Ministry of Defence security works and any Home Office works or use.

Locations and secure handling

5. If you regard camera locations as security sensitive, agree an Official Sensitive handling arrangement or a closed viewing so that positions and mounting heights can be verified by officers. In the alternative provide, for each building elevation, the number of cameras and the mounting height range. This is required to complete our environmental note.

Water environment

6. Provide the nearest distances in metres from the installed cameras and any fencing to mapped watercourses, ditches and culverts on or abutting the land.

Fencing

7. Your response says temporary fencing is not development because there are no footings. A continuous means of enclosure is ordinarily operational development whether bolted down or block weighted. If you rely on permitted development please

identify the legal basis. For Crown land this is usually Part 19 Class R which limits any gate fence wall or other means of enclosure to a maximum height of 4.6 metres. If you rely on a different provision please state which one and why it applies.

Please provide for each run:

- start and end points shown on a plan
- total length and any gaps
- height at every change point and any gates
- fixings and foundations including block weights or anchors
- intended duration and purpose
- nearest distance in metres to any highway used by vehicular traffic and to any watercourse or culvert.

If you maintain that any run is not development, please explain the physical form and the intended duration and why it does not amount to a means of enclosure.

Administrative point

8. The Ministry of Defence response is dated 11 December 2027. Please confirm the correct year for the chronology.

If you maintain that you cannot provide the information requested, please confirm who holds it and on what date a request for it will be made. In the absence of a substantive response we will proceed on the basis that no screening direction exists, that no Natural England opinion has been sought, and that permitted development cannot lawfully be relied upon unless and until the environmental gateways are cleared.

We are open to a short call this week to agree a secure route for sharing any sensitive material, should this be necessary.

Yours sincerely



Chris Bending
Director of Place