



Matthew Barber
Police & Crime Commissioner
for Thames Valley

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The Rt Hon Anna Turley MP
Minister for Border Security and Asylum
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

22nd September 2026

Dear Minister,

Asylum Seeker Camp – MOD Bicester

Yesterday I met with your officials regarding funding for Thames Valley Police to deal with increased demand as a result of the Government's proposed asylum camp in Piddington.

Whilst I acknowledge that I will be able to apply for some limited financial support for the Force, I would urge you to review the Home Office's policy regarding large asylum sites. As Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, I find it unacceptable that I cannot seek full cost recovery for the additional policing burdens that will inevitably come as a result of your Government's decisions.

Local taxpayers are already having to pick up the bill for the underfunding of Neighbourhood Police Officers (the Home Office covering just 40% of the cost of new officers that have been announced); no additional funding being provided to cover the cost of State Visits taking place within Thames Valley and reductions to funding for our Regional Organised Crime Unit.

Residents in Thames Valley should not have to bear the additional financial burden of policing protest, and the vastly disproportionate increase in population in the village of Piddington.

As a minimum there will be a need to increase neighbourhood policing within the area, to increase visibility, provide proactive crime prevention and to deal with, and investigate, any crime that does take place. Any increase in population inevitably increases the likelihood of crime, and normally we would see at least some increase in funding through Council Tax. Given the size of the proposed camp, this would be the equivalent of around £281,000 each year. This sum would at least help to support the cost of a small neighbourhood policing team to go some way to address the local operational needs.

In addition, we have already seen significant and sustained protest activity. If this continues at the current rate, we estimate this could easily cost Thames Valley Police around £210,000 a year to safely manage.

Given the nature of the site and the significant works planned by the Home Office should planning permission be granted, there is also the very real prospect of protest activity that seeks to hamper the construction phase. Thames Valley Police have experience of dealing with such protests, which can be complex and costly, at HS2 sites within the Force area. A

reasonable estimate of having to assemble a full protest team to fully manage incidents and investigations would be £1.2m, and that is without the additional cost of bringing further resources in to support that team.

A reasonable estimate therefore of the ADDITIONAL costs to Thames Valley Police would be around £1.7m per annum, at least during the construction phase. This is the estimate shared with your officials yesterday and the basis on which we will be making an application.

I must stress, however, that this is not the FULL cost to taxpayers within Thames Valley. Inevitably resources will be moved around the Force to meet operational needs. It is not acceptable for my residents to feel they are receiving a worse service from the police in other parts of Thames Valley, because of increased demand to deal with protests and crime at or around the asylum camp.

Your policy which required payment in arrears, with no guarantee of funding, and explicitly ruling out full cost recovery and the recruitment of additional police officers, will only hinder my ability to ensure efficient and effective policing across the whole of Thames Valley.

Thames Valley Police and I need assurances that funding will be granted in advance of making financial commitments, and I seek greater flexibility to ensure full cost recovery on behalf of my residents so that they are not bearing the brunt of Government policy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Barber', with a stylized, cursive script.

Matthew Barber
Police & Crime Commissioner