



Ministry  
of Defence

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4.6.1

26<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Thank you very much for your letter of 19 February 2019 about the plans to build over 2,000 houses on the vacated St George's Barracks in Rutland.

You are right to make reference to the various areas of government policy which point towards the requirement to build houses on this site. The cost of vacating the Barracks and maintaining it while any development takes place runs into the many millions and the Ministry of Defence (MOD), under Treasury rules, is required to optimise its return on the use of the land in addition to the obvious need to recoup the costs of any transition to its different use.

Only this week we have issued a public policy statement on seven other MOD sites which in many ways are similar to St George's Barracks. That statement covers Claro and Deverell Barracks in Ripon, North Yorkshire, RAF Henlow in Bedfordshire; MOD Site 4 in Stafford; MDPGA Wethersfield in Braintree, Essex; Swynnerton Training Camp in Stone, Staffordshire; Prince William of Gloucester Barracks in Grantham, Lincolnshire and Chetwynd Barracks in Chilwell, Nottinghamshire. We plan to build over 10,000 houses on these sites in partnership with Homes England.

It is undoubtedly fortunate for Rutland that the initiative of the Council in working with the MOD had already reached an advanced state of understanding based on the MOU dated September 2017. Uniquely in such circumstances, by engaging with the MOD at an early stage, Rutland Council has been able to both reduce the number of houses that might be built from about 5,000 to 2,000 and has also secured detailed control over the design of anything that might be constructed.

When the MOD vacates a site of this sort, given that it is brownfield site, there is a presumption in favour of housing development which in normal circumstances would lead to the sale of the land in whole or in parts to a developer whose only constraint would be broader planning and building control rules. It is therefore not at all true for anyone to argue that if there were no MOU and no negotiation with the MOD, the County Council would be able to block development on such a scale.

**The Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan KCMG MP**  
**House of Commons**  
**London**  
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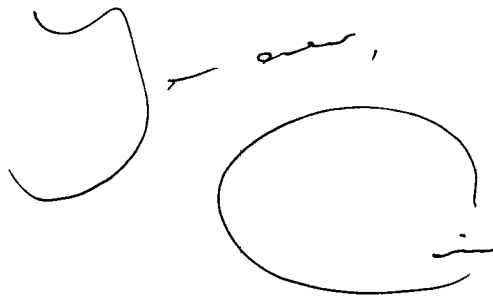
The cooperation between the Council and the MOD has reduced the number of houses that will be built to the barest minimum that is acceptable in terms of policy and economic return. If it were to be abandoned, then the County would face the prospect once again on seeing many thousands of houses built on the site.

In respect of alternative uses for the site other than housing, whereas there will be some quarrying on the eastern site of the development footprint, this is a separate issue from housing and all our studies have concluded that the sort of mixed use some of your constituents have proposed would not offer the economic returns we require. Indeed, going down that path would probably need to be accompanied by the construction of a greater number of houses in addition.

I am confident that my officials have approached the redevelopment of St George's Barracks with a high degree of professional responsibility and a genuine understanding of what is appropriate in the county of Rutland along with what is practical under government policy.

I hope the residents of Rutland will appreciate that by working with you and the Council, the MOD have discharged their responsibilities in a proper and constructive manner.

The 2,215 houses for the site, identified in the draft masterplan, will be built over a number of years. The final number of new homes will be determined through a detailed town planning process with the Council leading as the Local Planning Authority, which will include extensive public consultation. The planning application process will look at all aspects of the new development and consider local and national planning policies, but in particular the viability of the development as a new sustainable community. Through this process you can be assured that Rutland Council will only approve a development which is appropriate for Rutland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Williamson', written over a large, faint circular stamp or watermark.

**THE RT HON GAVIN WILLIAMSON CBE MP**