

Edinburgh MP calls for clarity on Redford Barracks



In a major Westminster parliamentary debate about the Defence estate Joanna Cherry QC MP for Edinburgh South West has called on the UK Government to provide clarity and reassurance following their proposals to close Redford cavalry and infantry barracks in 2022.

Last November the UK Government published its report, “A Better Defence Estate Strategy” which earmarked eight military facilities in Scotland for closure over the next fifteen years. Despite the title of the publication, the plan will have a huge impact on the ability to provide conventional defence and result in a loss of fifth of Scotland’s entire defence estate.

Defence Secretary, Michael Fallon claims the strategy will concentrate investment into fewer, better locations.

However, speaking in the Westminster Hall debate, Joanna Cherry said: “The closure of Redford barracks would remove a truly historic site from the military estate and leave families who live and work in my constituency in a position of great uncertainty.

“The proposals in the publication set out a commitment to deliver:

‘Regional centres of mass for light infantry battalions supporting national resilience and community engagement’ but it is not clear which of the centres in Edinburgh the MOD plans to use for that purpose. The obvious choice for the Scottish Army HQ would be Redford Barracks.”

During the debate and in letters to the Secretary of State for Defence and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence, Joanna Cherry has continued to call for the UK Government to engage with the Scottish Government: "As the local MP for the area, I would be happy to meet the Minister to help facilitate constructive engagement between the UK Government, the Scottish government, civic society in Edinburgh and the relevant local authorities. To that end, it would be helpful if he could confirm when the consultation will begin, how long it will last and the format it will take".

Following the debate, Joanna Cherry said: "Although the Minister failed to answer my questions direct, I am pleased that he has committed to write to me.

"As Redford Barracks has been situated in my constituency for almost 100 years, it is truly an historic site and remains an integral part of the Edinburgh South West Community. Redford should be seen as a key military asset to the MOD rather than as a commercial development opportunity.

"Given the cultural and historical significance of Redford, the UK Government must now enter into a period of active engagement with me and my constituents. I will continue to raise my constituents concerns until that commitment is met."