

MSP in fresh call to keep Redford Barracks

Local MSP Gordon MacDonald has called on Tory Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson to reverse his predecessor's proposals to close Redford Cavalry and Infantry Barracks by 2022.

Former Tory Defence Secretary Michael Fallon proposed eight military sites in Scotland as part of the Ministry of Defence's drastic 20% cuts to Scotland's defence estate, including Redford Barracks. Gordon points out that the government did this while committing to spend £205 billion renewing Trident something which he and his party the SNP oppose.

He also says that a 2016 National Audit Office report found that the MoD's proposed closures would not guarantee financial savings, concluding that the Ministry of Defence had increased costs over the long-term and risked the UK's military capability by engaging in poorly planned cost cutting exercises and working from a confused long-term strategy.



Gordo

n said: “The Tories think they can do whatever they want to Scotland and get away with it – and that includes the massive cuts to Scotland’s defence footprint.

“It is little wonder a National Audit Office report concluded the MoD did not have a plan for the funding and delivery of an ‘optimised estate’ when vital investment is being taken away from Scotland’s conventional while hundreds of billions of pounds is committed to Trident nuclear weapons.

“Having raised the issue with MoD previously about the impact of the proposed closure of Redford Cavalry and Infantry Barracks – his department told me to write to Fife council. This shows a complete disregard for the jobs and communities in the south west of Edinburgh which depend on the bases.

“I want the Defence Secretary to reverse his predecessor’s unjustified and poorly planned decision to slash Scotland’s defence estate by 20% and end this damaging centralisation agenda that completely ignores the needs of Scotland.”

Letter to the Defence Secretary:

Dear Gavin,

I write to you regarding the implications of your predecessor's proposed military base closures for Scotland and indeed the UK's military capability.

The announcement went far beyond many people's worst expectations and many of my constituents are deeply concerned about the plan to close Redford Cavalry and Infantry Barracks by 2022.

For the communities and service personnel affected this has been a devastating announcement, decided with little consultation in Scotland or consideration for the local communities and economies that will be affected.

A 2016 National Audit Office report found that the MoD had increased costs over the long-term and risked the UK's military capability by engaging in poorly planned cost-cutting exercises and working from a confused long-term strategy. The decision to slash one-fifth of the defence footprint in Scotland whilst spending £205bn on Trident is an example of this confusion.

Can you please clarify the MoD's strategy for the proposed closure of both Redford Cavalry and Infantry Barracks, and how your government plans to support those affected? Can you also clarify whether or not the UK government has examined the economic and social impact of these closures, such as the number of jobs that will be lost in the surrounding areas?

I hope that you can reconsider your predecessor's decision to close Redford Cavalry and Infantry Barracks as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely

Gordon MacDonald MSP for Edinburgh Pentlands