

# Time for honesty about closure of barracks

Having not received a response to his letter sent at the beginning of May, Gordon Macdonald MSP is calling for the UK Government to be honest about their intent behind the closure of Redford Barrack and the selling of the site.



Gordon MacDonald MSP

The Edinburgh Pentlands MSP has been campaigning against the closure of Redford Cavalry and Infantry Barracks since 2011, which he says will have “extensive consequences for Edinburgh.” The Barracks currently accommodate 240 serving personnel and 80 civilians, whilst also providing accommodation and rehearsal space for the Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

The SNP MSP is now calling into question the justifications

that the MoD has given for the proposed closure, challenging MoD claims over potential for savings, and urging the UK government to “be honest” with the public.

Since closure was first suggested in the former Defence Secretary Liam Fox’s base review, the MoD has claimed that it would generate savings for the UK government (and raise up to £50M). With the running cost of Redford Cavalry and Infantry Barracks approximately £3.1M per year, Macdonald has questioned the need to find this particular 0.009% saving to MoD total budget – which in 2016/2017 was £35.3 Billion.

The Edinburgh Pentlands MSP went on to question further claims, by the MoD, that the Barracks, which were built between 1909 and 1915, are “no longer fit for purpose” – given that the MoD has no plans to close Wellington Barracks (based in the centre of London), which were built in 1833.

Gordon has suggested that a more likely motivation behind the sell-off will be the financial windfall from selling off the land for commercial property development.

The MoD has already identified that there is the potential to build up to 711 houses on the 200 acre Redford site. With land in Edinburgh currently selling at £2M per acre, the Tory government would bank over £250M from this settlement.

The SNP MSP is now calling for the UK Government to be honest and admit that the motivation behind the closure is purely asset stripping.

Commenting Gordon Macdonald, said: “It’s time for the Tory government to be honest. If this was genuinely about saving money within the Defence budget, then perhaps they should look to the £205 billion they are wasting on Trident and not the £3.1M that it costs to maintain Redford Barracks.

“It’s clear that this is about asset stripping Scotland’s defence estate. The UK government want to close down Redford

Barracks, in order for them, not Scotland, to profit to the tune of £250M.

“And on top of this, they have shown no regard for the huge upheaval in the community that this will create and no regard to the impact that this will have on local public services.

“It’s time the Tories started telling people the truth about this closure, that will have serious implications for so many people in Edinburgh.”