



House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Mark Lancaster TD MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for
Defence Veterans, Reserves and Personnel
Ministry of Defence
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

Our Ref: ZA4736
8 November 2016

Dear Mark,

I wrote to you previously regarding the proposed closure and sale of Stonehouse Barracks in Plymouth. I am writing to you again today following the Secretary of State's statement in the House this afternoon regarding the Royal Citadel and the subsequent impact on those based and working there.

As I know you are aware, given how many times we have spoken on this subject, the military is intertwined in Plymouth's history, its culture and I strongly believe its future. They have occupied sites within the city for hundreds of years and although their footprint at present is much smaller than it once was, their importance to the city and its economy is not to be underestimated.

However, I recognise fully that the British military prides itself by being at the forefront of military training, skill and technology. It logically follows that military command would want the best facilities for its most valuable assets, its personnel, so buildings built hundreds of years ago may not meet the high demand and expectation placed upon it, let alone be particularly economical.

It is though, incredibly important that those currently based at the Royal Citadel, either in military or civilian positions, be given some sort of future certainty, not just for them, but also for their families who have built lives in our beautiful part of the UK. Any further assuredness, beyond what is included in the official MOD strategy, that you can provide to them would be very well received and also help to give confidence to the local economy.

Previously, the MOD was very helpful and recognised what an impact these sorts of proposals can have on those affected and replied to me in an expedited fashion. In the letter dated 30 September and signed off by duty Minister, Earl Howe, it says the government's "intent is to do this by building on the existing Amphibious Centre of Excellence within the wider Plymouth area". It is good to see that 29 Commando also seem set to remain within the Plymouth area and I would stress how important this is, not only to those concerned, but the city as a whole.

I would also like to make it clear that the addition of further units to the city is a welcome commitment by the government in recognising Plymouth's importance in the UK's military structure and furthermore, the reaffirmation of Devonport's pivotal role within the operations of the Royal Navy is very good news for those working at the site and whose livelihoods depend on it.

Thank you for your time in this matter and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Johnny Mercer'.

Johnny Mercer
Member of Parliament for Plymouth Moor View