

Sent by email

Rt Hon Dan Jarvis MBE MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

1 July 2026

Dear Dan,

I am writing to urge you reconsider the decision to discharge RAF Linton-on-Ouse in North Yorkshire to the Home Office, for use as an asylum accommodation site and instead to ensure that the site remains available to us in the region as a key, strategic site for housing.

I fully recognise the context in which these proposals are being considered. The Government has committed to reducing small boat crossings, bringing the asylum system under control and ending the costly reliance on asylum hotels. I also understand the need to identify alternative forms of accommodation that are more sustainable and deliver better value for the taxpayer. However, while I support those wider objectives, I do not believe RAF Linton-on-Ouse is the right site to help achieve them.

As was concluded previously, RAF Linton-on-Ouse remains a remote location with limited infrastructure, limited access to services and significant security and community cohesion challenges associated with supporting a large new residential population of asylum seekers in an isolated rural area in a rural police force. The fundamental issues that led to concerns about the site's suitability in the past have not changed. Simply put, this remains the wrong choice of site for this purpose.

At the same time, RAF Linton-on-Ouse represents one of the most significant strategic development opportunities in our region. York and North Yorkshire face acute housing pressures, with too many residents struggling to access affordable homes and too many communities constrained by a lack of housing supply. The site has the potential to deliver thousands of new homes, address those connectivity issues, support local jobs, unlock private investment and make a major contribution to our region's long-term economic growth.

The economic and housing case for redevelopment is compelling. Bringing forward the site would help address housing need, support the construction sector and wider supply chains, and generate lasting benefits for local communities. Any decision that risks delaying or undermining that opportunity would be deeply disappointing for residents who have already waited several years since the site's closure to see progress made.

I have been encouraged by the positive and constructive engagement that has taken place with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation regarding the future of RAF Linton-on-Ouse. Conversations with the DIO have consistently demonstrated a shared recognition of the site's development potential, and I understand that engagement with the development sector and

market testing has generated positive interest. This gives us confidence that there is a credible pathway to delivering the homes, jobs and investment that the site is capable of supporting.

For that reason, I believe it would be a mistake to divert the site away from its long-term redevelopment potential at this stage. York and North Yorkshire need strategic sites such as RAF Linton-on-Ouse to come forward if we are to meet the Government's housing targets, local demand and realise the economic opportunities available to our communities.

I therefore urge you to reconsider proposals to use RAF Linton-on-Ouse for asylum accommodation and to continue working with local partners to unlock the site's long-term potential. I hope we can work closely with you, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and prospective developers to realise a development that delivers lasting benefits for our residents, supports the Government's ambitions for growth and helps address the significant housing needs of our region.

RAF Linton-on-Ouse is simply the wrong site for asylum accommodation, but it is exactly the right site to help meet the housing and economic ambitions of York and North Yorkshire.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you and your officials in the near future.

With my very best wishes,



David Skaith
Mayor of York and North Yorkshire