

Sent by email

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Dear David,

Thank you for the call yesterday. I very much appreciate you and your colleagues taking the time to talk through the current proposals regarding Linton-on-Ouse, as well as your offer of continued dialogue and engagement as matters progress.

Following our discussion, I have updated the political leadership of both local authorities on the conversation and made them aware of the opportunity to raise any questions and engage further as the proposals develop. In the interests of public transparency and assurance, I would also welcome written clarification and confirmation of a number of points arising from our discussion.

School Proximity and Safeguarding

Firstly, I would appreciate clarification regarding the proximity of Linton-on-Ouse Primary School to the former RAF site. The school is located very close to the site's perimeter and, given comments made by the Home Secretary that sites close to schools or nurseries should not generally be considered for accommodating asylum seekers, I would be grateful to understand how this will be considered within the current proposals and any site suitability assessments that have been undertaken.

It will reassure the local community enormously if this does in fact mean that this site is not suitable for consideration for this purpose.

Policing Resources and Funding

I would also welcome further detail regarding the anticipated compensation for any impact on policing resources and local policing resilience.

I was particularly concerned to hear that North Yorkshire Police may not be entitled to recover the full costs associated with any additional policing requirements arising from use of the site should the proposals progress. If full cost recovery is not available, there is a risk that additional policing demand generated by the site would need to be met from existing resources, placing further pressure on a force already responsible for policing England's largest county by geographical area.

As I said in our meeting, this concern is particularly acute given the rural nature of North Yorkshire, the significant seasonal fluctuations in demand experienced across the county, and the fact that Linton-on-Ouse doesn't currently require a great deal of policing resource. Any requirement to provide additional policing at the site could therefore have implications for the deployment of officers and resources elsewhere in North Yorkshire, potentially impacting neighbourhood policing, response capability and wider policing services in other communities.

Against that backdrop, I would welcome clarification on:

- What assessment is being undertaken regarding the likely policing demand generated by the proposals?
- What level of Home Office funding, grants or other financial support mechanisms would be made available to support additional policing activity?
- What assessment is being undertaken regarding the impact on local policing resilience, neighbourhood policing and response capability across North Yorkshire?
- How the Home Office intends to ensure that any additional policing requirements associated with the site would not result in resources being diverted from other communities across the county?
- What consideration is being given to the particular challenges already associated with policing a large rural county, including geographical coverage, workforce pressures and seasonal demand patterns?

Fire, Ambulance and Wider Emergency Services Capacity

As Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime, I am equally concerned about the implications for wider emergency service provision.

The former RAF site was designed primarily around military and aviation operations rather than supporting a significant residential population. I would therefore welcome clarification regarding assessments undertaken in relation to:

- Appropriate and timely access for all emergency vehicles.
- Emergency planning and evacuation arrangements.
- The suitability and resilience of local transport infrastructure.
- Any additional resources or funding that may be required to support emergency service provision.

Long-Term Development of the Site

During our discussion there was reference to the site's longer-term development ambitions. I would be grateful for written confirmation that any Home Office use of the site would not adversely impact, delay or otherwise prejudice the long-term plans for housing and redevelopment of the former RAF Linton-on-Ouse site. Given the importance of housing delivery across the region, it would also be helpful to understand how the current proposals fit within the site's longer-term vision and whether there would be any implications or caveats for wider plans with the Ministry of Defence and other partners to bring forward future development of the site.

Changes Since the 2022 Proposals

As we discussed this morning, given the significant public interest in the proposals brought forward in 2022, I would appreciate further detail regarding what has changed between those proposals and the current plans.

In particular, it would be helpful to understand:

- How the intended use and operation of the site differs from the 2022 proposal.
- Whether there are changes to expected occupancy levels.
- Any differences in the resident cohort.
- Changes to security, management and support arrangements.
- What lessons have been learned from the previous proposals and how those lessons have informed the current approach.

Asylum Processing and Interviews

I would also welcome greater clarity regarding how asylum processing would take place in practice for anyone accommodated at the Linton on Ouse site. Specifically;

- Whether asylum interviews and casework activities would be conducted on-site or off-site.
- If off-site, where residents would be required to travel for interviews and appointments.
- What transport arrangements would be provided.
- Whether Home Office staff or operational functions would be permanently based at Linton-on-Ouse.
- The extent to which residents would remain on site versus travelling elsewhere for appointments, interviews and support services.

I appreciate that some of the information requested may be operationally sensitive or subject to ongoing consideration. However, I would be grateful for as comprehensive a response as possible. As you know, these matters are of considerable interest to local communities and clear information will be essential in ensuring that discussions remain constructive, informed and evidence based.

Thank you once again for taking the time to speak with me this week. I look forward to receiving any further information you are able to share and to continuing the dialogue as proposals develop.

Best wishes,



Jo Coles

Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority