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Dear David

Government Proposal for Asylum Accommodation at Linton-on-Ouse – Request for Urgent Joint Meeting and action

I am writing to you in relation to the Government's announcement of its intention to accommodate potentially approximately 1,000 adult male asylum-seekers at the former RAF Linton-on-Ouse site, for an undisclosed period of time.

I want to be clear at the outset that North Yorkshire Council fully recognises the importance of ensuring that those seeking asylum are treated with dignity and provided with safe and appropriate accommodation while their case is processed. This is not in question.

However, it is equally our duty as publicly elected representatives, to speak and act in the interests and wellbeing of the communities we serve as our primary concern. In this instance, there has been strong and consistent opposition from the local community, and wider area, to the proposed use of Linton-on-Ouse for such a large number of single male asylum seekers. Those concerns are not abstract – they are grounded in the fundamental unsuitability of the location for a development of this scale and nature.

Linton-on-Ouse is a small, rural village with extremely limited infrastructure and services. There are no appropriate facilities in the immediate vicinity to support a cohort of this size, whether in terms of healthcare, transport connectivity, community integration opportunities, or access to essential day-to-day services. It is also reasonable to make the point that this plan will create extra financial burden, which is currently unfunded, on the police force and wider agencies providing services. The proposal would place significant and unsustainable pressure on local provision, while also risking the wellbeing of those accommodated at the site, who would be placed in an isolated setting lacking the support networks they require.

In short, this is the wrong proposal in the wrong location evidenced by the fact the site has been considered and rejected previously on the basis that it is not suitable.

Given the cross-boundary implications for both North Yorkshire and the City of York – and the strategic leadership role of the Mayoral Combined Authority – it is imperative that we take a coordinated and robust approach and stand shoulder to shoulder with our communities which are expressing valid concerns.

I am therefore seeking an urgent joint meeting to agree a unified regional position and to consider how we can collectively utilise all available levers – political, strategic, operational and legal – to press Government to reconsider this decision, engage meaningfully with us, and for the Government to come up with a more suitable solution.

I look forward to being able to work collectively with you on this issue to provide a united stand for the region.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl', with a horizontal line underneath.

Cllr Carl Les, Leader of the Council