



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Defence Infrastructure Organisation

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Chris Lewis,
Head of Planning Services,
Shepway District Council,
Civic Centre,
Castle Hill Avenue,
Folkestone,
Kent
CT20 2QY

Dear Chris,

The Shorncliffe Rationalisation Project

You asked me to provide, in advance of the forthcoming Council Cabinet meeting to discuss the progress of the Core Strategy, a brief reminder of the MOD's work to date on the above Project and how it is intended it should proceed.

The Project was set up in early 2009 to look at reducing estate running costs and to that end how best to:

- Reduce the footprint of the Garrison and release areas of under-utilised estate
- Modernise a number of essential Defence facilities
- Replace 229 houses (service families accommodation), currently held under 10 year leases pepper-potted around East Kent

In terms of the reducing the footprint, approximately 74 hectares of Garrison land have been identified as suitable for release. This will consolidate Shorncliffe Garrison onto Sir John Moore Barracks and RASC Lines. The military cemetery, St Martins Plain Training Camp and the training areas beyond will also be retained. MOD has worked closely with Shepway DC to create a Masterplan for the Garrison which shows how the surplus land can come forward for redevelopment to provide up to 1200 new homes over the next 20 years, securing new housing and facilities for servicemen and women and also the local community.

The Defence facilities identified for modernisation will be re-provided at Sir John Moore Barracks and also at Lydd Training Camp. Outline planning applications were submitted to Shepway DC on 31st October, 2011 to permit at Sir John Moore Barracks the building of a new HQ office building and amalgamation of the Garrison and Royal Ghurka Regiment Messes. The Lydd application covers provision of a single modern building containing offices, stores and classrooms and a separate armoury for the staff of two training Units, currently housed in an assortment of decrepit buildings within Risborough Barracks but whose training largely takes place at Lydd Camp using the specialist facilities provided there. Also two accommodation blocks to provide additional transit (hostel type) bed spaces for soldiers visiting Lydd to undertake pre-deployment courses or to practise firing on the ranges. Currently the latter often have to be accommodated at Napier Barracks, Shorncliffe. These facilities will create significant cost savings and allow modern ways of working.

By taking advantage of the Key Worker Status of servicemen we believe, working with Shepway, to have devised an affordable, flexible solution for providing replacement SFA as part of the new housing development at the Garrison which will reduce travel costs and enhance living conditions for Ghurka and other families by ending their isolation from the social, cultural and educational provisions at Shorncliffe. It is our intention to approach the developer of the surplus land to set aside some 200 of the Affordable Housing Units for military use and we have had helpful discussions with Town and Country, one of the Shepway RSLs, on various tenure options.

It is our intention to market the surplus land at Shorncliffe for sale in one lot on a subject to planning basis in advance of Shepway D.C's public Examination into the Core Strategy. A large percentage of the surplus land can be released immediately to our purchaser. Where re-provisioning of MOD facilities is first required, we will be seeking to start building these by 2013/2014.

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte Cordy-Redden,
Project Manager,
Shorncliffe Rationalisation Project