



Public Meeting – 7:30 pm - 11th April 2017

Venue: Colinton Bowling Club

Agenda

Item	Subject	Time
1.	Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest	7:30
2.	Police Report	7:32
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 14 th March 2017	7:45
4.	Matters arising from the March minutes	7:55
5.	CC Reports	8:10
6.	A.O.C.B. to be notified to the Secy. prior to the meeting	8:25
7.	Public Questions	8:35
8.	Close	8:50

Draft minutes of the previous meeting and reports will be on the website

Times for each agenda item should be adhered to wherever possible to allow time for informal conversation after the business of the evening has been concluded

The next meeting is the AGM on: 9th May 2017 at 7:30pm in Colinton Bowling Club

Present

Dr David Houston (Chair), Tom McDonald (Vice-Chair), David Bewsey (Secretary), Catherine Lang, Bill Alexander, Ken Eyeington, Alastair Watt, Lorraine O'Shea, Cllr Jason Rust, Cllr Richard Lewis, PC Sonja Kaiser-Ferris & 4 members of the public.

Apologies: Gordon Neill (Treasurer), Cllr Elaine Aitken.

Welcome by the Chair: The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any declarations of interest. He informed the meeting that Nigel Rudd had submitted his resignation.

Presentation by Bruce Bennett of Tiphereth

Bruce Bennet of Tiphereth circulated a copy of their Annual Review and described proposals for the expansion of Tiphereth at Torphin which will allow them to continue to serve the people it cares for. Their plans will offering these vulnerable individuals a safe environment for in which to live, learn and work. It was suggested that a visit to the facility be organised.

ACTION: Secretary

Police Report

PC Kaiser-Ferris gave an overview of crime in the Colinton area which was much reduced from previous months. She also mentioned that Inspector Liz Duthie was on leave pending retirement. Also reported, was the appointment of Inspector Scott Richardson. There were some public questions on crime. The formal report is on the website.

Update on Redford Barracks Working Group (RBWG) – Cllr Richard Lewis

Cllr Lewis reported that there was to be an initial meeting of the RBWG on 28th March 2017 to which a representative of any local constituted group was welcome to attend. The composition of the group from elected representatives would be confirmed following the Council Elections in May.

Minutes of the meeting of 14th February 2017:

These were accepted as a true record.

Prop. Catherine Lang (CL), Sec. Bill Alexander (BA).

Matters arising from the Minutes.

The Chair stated that meeting with the Partnership manager, Mike Avery and the Chair of the Funding Panel had been arranged for Friday 24th March and that he would be accompanied by Lorraine O'Shea(LO) and Gordon Neill (GN) (Treasurer). The Secretary passed on a message from Mr Neill saying that he wished to declare an interest and in any case he would not be attending due to work commitments.

The Secretary objected to the Chair's proposal to present his "research paper" as it was still "Confidential" and had not been made available to the community nor discussed at a public meeting. The Chair responded angrily, supported by the Vice Chair, both disagreeing with the Secretary. The Secretary proposed a motion that the document was inadmissible seconded by CL. The Chair proposed an opposing motion, seconded by the Vice Chair. A vote was taken and the result was 3-5 against the Secretary's motion.

New Environment Walkabout Schedule – Report by the Secretary

The Secretary (DB) presented his report on the meeting held by the South West Neighbourhood to discuss changes to the Environment Walkabout schedule. The Walkabouts have had to undergo radical review due to the reduction in the South West Locality staff. The revisions include changing the emphasis away from service issues and concentrating on the quality of areas within the community. Service issues can still be reported through the Clarence / Report-it system online or by phone. DB acknowledged that there was a lack of feedback to the community from that system and suggested that he and Bill Alexander (BA) arrange a meeting with South West Neighbourhood officers to look into improving the feedback on requests. An initial area to be considered was Campbell Park. BA said he was in favour. DB suggested arranging a meeting with Craig Dunlop of CEC Parks & Greenspaces to examine possibilities. It was agreed to circulate the report to all constituted groups in Colinton.

A member of the community raised the issue of wheelchair access around the village. It was suggested that this issue be examined within the Walkabout. **ACTION Secretary & BA**

Colinton Strategy Report

The Secretary presented a report, written with assistance from the Vice Chair, on a Strategy for Colinton. The ambition was to work with other local groups to identify what could be done to assist Colinton to recover from the retail downturn suffered in recent times and seek out actions which might bring life back to the village and also improvements to the surrounding area.

He proposed that the development of this strategy be shared with all constituted groups in the Village. The Chair praised the actions of the Secretary in bringing this to everyone's attention. There was agreement that this was a good idea.

TM suggested that the redevelopment of Redford Barracks might create a threat to the village in the long-term.

LO agreed that collaborate with other groups in Colinton to share ideas and to evolve them was important.

AOCB

The Chair mentioned NEPs improvements to Woodfield Park pavements were starting. The Chair also raised the matter of website hosting renewal cost and the Secretary's expenses. This was agreed.

BA suggested the Community Council hold surgeries similar to the City Councillors. No decision was made on this.

AW asked about a presentation from Waste Management. The Secretary said the manager was on long term sick but would pursue the matter.

Public Comments.

Later No. 10 bus services to Bonaly was mentioned again. It was stated that Cllr Aitken was to have looked into this, but had not attended the last two meetings. It was agreed that contact with Lothian Buses would be made by the Community Council. **ACTION: Secretary**

Dog Poo bins on the Polofields and in Bonaly was raised by a resident. **ACTION: Secretary**

Date of next planned meeting: Tuesday 11th April 2017 at 7:30pm, at Colinton Bowling Club.

Draft

Secretary's Report

Redford Barracks Stakeholder meeting

The attached report of the meeting and copies of letters are attached

Cllr Richard Lewis started the meeting by stating that due to legal reasons this could not be an official RBWG meeting and therefore had to be convened by David Cooper, Service Manager, CEC Planning.

There were questions from all parties regarding the scope and timescale of disposal of the Redford Barracks site. It was suggested that a planning brief or strategy document needed to be created but it was perhaps too early to start this process. Cllr Lewis suggested that as a Council team needed to be formed and this might possibly involve recruitment and additional cost, it was perhaps prudent to hold back until some firm plan by the MOD came forward as there were some variances between a letter received by Cllr Rust from the Secretary of State, Sir Michael Fallon, and that of the Battalion Commander Lt Col Mackay as to both timescales and possible future roles for occupants of both Redford and Dreghorn Barracks.

Localities – moving forward together

This meeting brought together Council Officers, Community Councillors, Police and representatives of other bodies in the SW Locality for useful and informative discussion on current issues and how best to take matters forward. I hope to obtain the presentation as this will explain the key points.

Village Matters

Esk Properties took over the former RBS Building in the last week of March and have put the property up for Let. Camilla Pringle and Adam Peden are making progress with the premises next to the Bank which will be bespoke Kitchen fitters, Peden & Pringle. The shop required a considerable amount of work to be done to make it useable again, as will the former Bank building.

Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC)

I attended the latest meeting of the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC) on 23rd March. The key subject was licensing. I also represented EACC at the second Community Council Welcome session on 30th March 17.

Bonaly Bus Route 10

It should be noted that an extension of services to Bonaly has been scheduled from 23rd April 17. There will now be a Sunday service. Full details of other Colinton Bus Services are on the Roads/Transport section of the website.

David Bewsey
Secretary

Interim report on the Community Grants Fund meeting with Mike Avery, Cllr Jason Rust, Judy Wightman and Scott Neill.

Attending from Colinton CC: David Houston and Lorraine O'Shea (apologies Gordon Neill)

There were two parts to the discussion

1. Discuss the concerns highlighted in the paper (see Appendix) about the current operation of the CGF Funding Panel in Pentlands (FP)

a) Why are the eight Community Councils asked to appoint representatives but otherwise distanced from the information and decisions of the FP which are to do with important local projects and activities?

There is nothing to prevent a CC's Representative outlining the applications to be considered to his CC and advising them of the outcome of the FP's decision. However, the full application document contains some confidential information which should not be disclosed (e.g. Bank Account details). In this matter, we appear to have been misled by our Representative and Secretary.

b) Why is there such reluctance to have open public information about the FP applications and decisions both before and after meetings when, in other parts of the City, applications are posted in libraries, presented to public meetings or at least fully publicised promptly after decisions (with the outstanding balance updated regularly on the NP web site)?

Our local office is willing to improve the currency of reporting on the NP web site. It is acknowledged that there are relatively low numbers of visitors to this site and there is no objection to CCs publicising the information when it is known.

c) Given public money is involved, why are there no written rules for the FP operation or remits for representatives? In particular, financial and non-financial interests do not appear to be defined in written form.

If an FP representative or a CC is involved in the preparation of an application then that is declared and the representative's vote is disallowed. The local office feel that the Pentlands FP works well without written rules and that it is a better mechanism than most of the other NIPs, many of whom do not have an FP. It is for the FP as a whole to make the best decisions for the Pentlands area and it is not the role of a representative to "bring grant money into his area".

2. Discuss Participatory Budgeting (PB) for both CGF and other sources of local funding

(a) Look at pros and cons of the PB approach in general and the positive experience of Leith, Western and Portobello & Craigmillar in particular.

The Local Office and FP Chairman feel that the Leith PB system has worked there but that it would be difficult to operate PB in such a widespread area like Pentlands with eight CC areas and the absence of a single natural community hall. It would also be resource intensive at a time when the Council is likely to be reducing community support staffing. An applicant's fair approach was popular initially in Leith but has now fallen off. It was acknowledged that other methods such as the use of libraries and post/email have had more sustained success but again, this would be more difficult to organise in Pentlands where some areas have no libraries. The use of voluntary CC resource to run PB exercises has not been considered.

b) CEC set up an initiative on PB corporately with a special sub-committee - is this still going?

Edinburgh Council does still have a PB Committee to encourage the use of PB and Scott Neill attends it.

c) Explore how PB could be operated in Pentlands and who would be involved in its organisation.

See answer to 2(a) above

d) It is up to the Pentlands NP to decide on any change to the present CGS system but could PB be piloted in say one community council area?

It was suggested that Colinton CC could consider PB exercises for attracting grant money from other sources but that the current Pentlands FP System was the best to distribute CGS funding for the area.

More information on PB and local case studies such as Leith Links would be provided by Scott Neill.

It is proposed that:

(i) Colinton CC does not request any change to the FP System in Pentlands.

(ii) Colinton CC clarifies the remit of its FP Representative and evolves a reasonable system for CGS information provision to the CC and involvement in the process.

(iii) The research into the use of PB for other local project funding continues.

David Houston

Chair, Colinton CC

Community Grants Fund – Could the Pentlands Funding Panel be Improved?

Introduction

At present, there are relatively few sources of City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) finance for the local community to make direct decisions about. There is Colinton Community Council's own budget of a few hundred pounds. There is the NEPs (neighbourhood environment programme) funding of improvements to roads and footpaths of typically £40k per annum over the whole of the Pentlands for which local bids are allowed through a procedure run by SW Roads. Finally, there is the Community Grants Fund administered through a Funding Panel set up by the Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership (PNP) which in 2016-17 had funds of £43,583 available to award to local organisations through a standard application process.

Our Secretary has issued a report which describes most of the aspects of how the Pentlands Funding Panel operates. This report emphasises that while the application forms and associated rules are uniform across the City, CEC has decided to leave it up to each of the 12 Neighbourhood Partnerships to decide the method of assessing and deciding on grant applications. Our local PNP has decided to set up a Funding Panel which consists of one representative from each of the eight community council areas in Pentlands together with six elected politicians for the Pentland Hills and Colinton/Fairmilehead wards supported by a CEC officer. Our current representative is Gordon Neill, our Treasurer.

Questions and Concerns about the Current Operation of the Funding Panel

As one highly experienced in local government procedures and methods, I found some aspects of the way the Pentlands Funding Panel (PFP) operates surprising.

At first, I was pleased to note that PNP reinforced the role of community councils in the area by using them to nominate the eight local representatives. However, it appeared that our representative could disclose nothing about the content of the agenda, never mind details of any Colinton application. This seemed to contradict the principle of community council reinforcement – indeed, isolate the community council from any democratic involvement in the process. On questioning the PFP Chair, I received the following clarifications:

- (i) “The representative can discuss the application with his community council to ascertain their views as a whole but not pass the papers on”.
- (ii) (in respect of a local application of interest) “I am sure that your representative can advise you as to the content of the application in outline”.
- (iii) “Any input into an application by a community council may be regarded as a non- financial interest and therefore the representative would not be in a position to speak or vote on the application.”

Most unusually, these PFP rules are not available in written form. CEC appear to regard their officer's monitoring role to be sufficient control of the process.

My other main concern was public access to information about the applications and the resulting grant decision. At the time, the first occasion that these were publicly accessible was in the draft minutes submitted to the next PNP meeting which could be months afterwards. Although there was a page on the PNP website this was over a year out of date. I noticed that the equivalent page on the Inverleith NP was bang up-to-date both in awards made and in the funds left to be bid for during the remainder of the financial year – a far more reasonable approach to openness and transparency to their communities.

Our Secretary and Treasurer robustly defended the existing system in Pentlands and have not yet acknowledged the clarifications above which could increase Colinton CC's democratic input into the fund awarding process. However, I understand the Secretary has already taken action to persuade our local CEC Officer to improve the currency of the PNP website which now includes most of the 2016-17 awards but does not give the figure of funds left to be bid for in the current financial year.

After asking questions about the current operation, I was concerned that my motives may have been misinterpreted by colleagues in neighbouring community councils and so I made the following statement to the last meeting of the PNP on 17 January 2017 having first circulated it to all Colinton CC councillors for comment:

“I would like to thank Judy (*the Chair*) and the community representatives on the Pentlands Funding Panel for the good work that they do and also thank Mike Avery and his team for their professional co-ordination of the process.

As Colinton Community Council is relatively new to Pentlands, we would like to explore how we could better relate to the work of the Panel and welcome the opportunity offered by Cllr Rust and Mr Avery to discuss this at a meeting.”

Other Approaches to Community Grant Fund Administration across the City

There has been Scottish Government and other support for a more modern approach to grant funding in local communities called Participatory Budgeting (PB). With this method, the principle is to let the local community decide itself on the most deserving applications by public vote. See, for example: <https://pbscotland.scot/> Typically, applications are posted up in libraries and other council buildings in the local area and there is an applicants' fair where each has a stand in a hall or a presentation to local people prior to the vote.

Three NPs in Edinburgh, Leith, Western and Portobello & Craigmillar have used PB and results are very positive. Reasons put forward for the benefits of this approach are:

- It enables local people to have a say in what happens in their area - involving them in local decision making processes.
- It helps more people become aware of and get involved in the work of Neighbourhood Partnerships.
- It gets funding to smaller groups that do not normally access funding streams.
- It helps stakeholders to understand the difficulties and processes involved in allocating limited funding
- It is more transparent than a 'behind closed doors' process. It is important to set realistic expectations for any PB project. Clear information on amount of money available, maximum amount for any one project/item, qualifying criteria, choice available, decision-making process etc must be made publicly available.
- It creates valuable networking opportunities.
- People enjoy the 'Community Spirit' of coming together to make the decision.

Following many other areas up and down the UK, Leith NP was the first in Edinburgh to adopt this approach over six years ago and have gradually refined it so that in 2016-17, 100% of the Community Grants Fund is decided by their PB approach called 'Leith Decides!'. The initiative is very well described on the Leith NP website where there are many Q&As covered at:

<http://www.edinburghnp.org.uk/neighbourhood-partnerships/leith/about/%C2%A3eith-decides/faqs/>

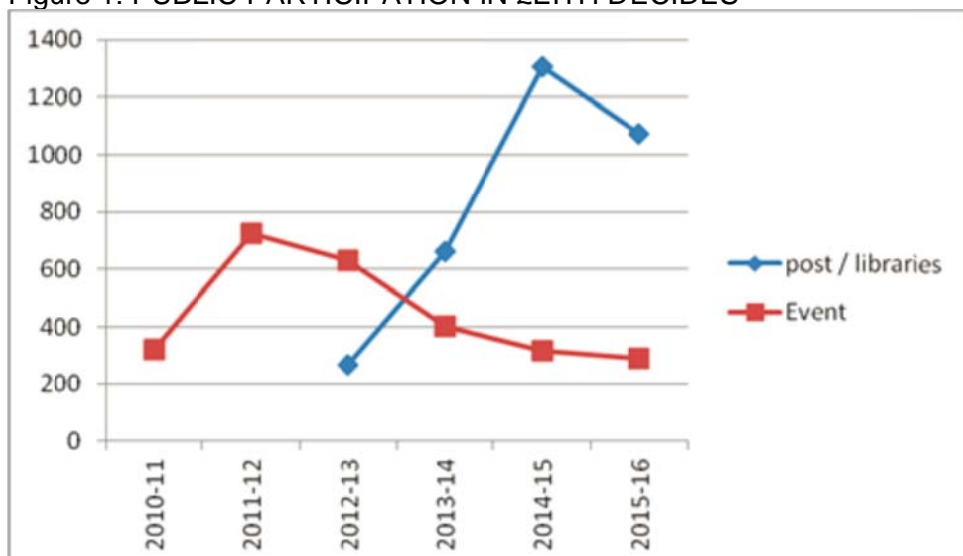
There is also a comprehensive report on how they have refined the methods of public participation over the six years of operation up to March 2016 available at:

<http://www.edinburghnp.org.uk/media/18420/LNP%20Development%20Report%2017%20Mar%2016.pdf>

Portobello & Craigmillar have been using PB for 2 years in 'You Decide!' and Western Edinburgh have used it specifically for projects for young people in 'You[th] Decide!'.

One of the most impressive things about the Leith experience, is the number of local people who have become involved, especially after the third year when postal and library voting were added to the methods of participation (over 1600 people took part in 2014-15):

Figure 1: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN £EITH DECIDES



In Colinton, one of our key challenges is to engage better and far more widely with our local population. Could PB help us do that? After all, there are quite a number of local libraries and other suitable buildings in Pentlands to help encourage interest and be part of the voting process. Note that any decision to use PB or change the PFP process can only be decided by the PNP overall but, perhaps, Colinton could volunteer to be a pilot community for PB?

Within CEC there is a commitment to extend the PB approach across the City as a means of increasing levels of participation and allowing residents to influence the use of resources. This was agreed at the Communities and Neighbourhood Committee on 24 September 2013.

From a broader perspective, there is no doubt that there will be an increase in local community decision making. The recent Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 enacted only 18 months ago heralds that direction in government thinking. There are already opportunities from other sources of funds to communities prepared to use PB for decision-making.

Suggestions for consideration by the Community Council:

- (i) Fully discuss current and possible future arrangements for CGF allocation in Pentlands;
- (ii) Ensure our PFP representative communicates a list of the applicants and an outline of their applications as far as he is currently allowed and takes on board any views that are agreed across the majority of Colinton Community councillors;
- (iii) Request further improvements in written rules, transparency and public communication about the applications for funding to the PFP as they are considered and approved;
- (iv) Seek a meeting with the Locality Manager and his team to discuss PB and its possible application to Pentlands and research further before bringing recommendations back to a future meeting of the Community Council for consideration.

David Houston
Chair, Colinton CC.

7 February 2017

Redford Barracks stakeholder meeting note (29 March 2017)

Attendees:

- Councillor Elaine Aitken (CEC Colinton/Fairmilehead ward)
- Mike Avery (CEC South West Locality)
- David Bewsey (Colinton Community Council)
- Duncan Campbell (Colinton Community Conservation Trust)
- David Cooper (CEC Development)
- Kyle Drummond (CEC Development)
- Iain Gott (Colinton Amenity Association)
- Hazel Graham (CEC Edinburgh Guarantee)
- Lynne Halfpenny (CEC Culture)
- Councillor David Key (CEC Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart ward)
- Heather Levy (Firrhill Community Council)
- Councillor Richard Lewis (CEC Colinton/Fairmilehead ward)
- Councillor Jason Rust (CEC Colinton/Fairmilehead ward)
- Elaine Scott (CEC Housing)
- Chris Seiler (Colinton Community Conservation Trust)
- Norman Tinlin (Fairmilehead Community Council)
- Elaine Watson (CEC Communities and Families)

Note

- RL welcomed the attendees and introduced the meeting chair, DCo. DCo summarised the current situation, explaining that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation had stated that Redford Barracks would close in 2022 and the Council was in early talks with the DIO to gain a better understanding of their plans.
- DB read from a letter received from Lt Col Doug Mackay of the British Army that stated that Redford Barracks was expected to be in use until 2022 and might ultimately not close. DB suggested that the closure of Craigiehall was of more immediate relevance to the Council.
 - DCo noted that Craigiehall is green belt land so is a distinct proposition from a planning perspective.
- IG suggested that a planning brief be prepared for Redford Barracks and that the community should help to shape this.
 - DCo suggested that the DIO could be invited to sit on the working group and that the group could help shape a planning brief for Redford Barracks.
- DCa suggested that the complexity of Redford Barracks meant that a brief might be inadequate and a master-plan might be more appropriate, highlighting the parade grounds as an important example of open space.
- JR suggested that the material previously prepared by Fiona Kell could be useful.
- DK asked to clarify that the DIO was not proposing to gift the land in question to Edinburgh.
 - DCo confirmed that this was very unlikely but noted that there are ongoing discussions about the concept of a single public sector estate. The DIO might be willing to work with the Council to develop the land if this avoids a potentially time consuming and risky planning process.
- CS asked if the relocation of service families would impact upon the nearby schools.
 - DCo suggested that there might be an impact, but that any redevelopment of the barracks for residential uses could be expected to increase demand for school spaces.

- DCa asked where specialist uses such as the piping centre would be relocated.
 - DCo noted that the DIO had suggested that some uses such as the Army Reserve would potentially remain in place if relocating them was impractical.
- IG suggested that the closure might not come to fruition – referring to the abandoned proposals for Kirknewton – and suggested the group not move too quickly.
 - HL suggested that having a planning brief would put the group in a stronger position.
- IG observed that there were some contradictions in the information provided and that it would be good to have clarity.
- HL asked how many units Redford Barracks could support if redeveloped for residential.
 - DCo confirmed that this had not been modelled but that given the scale of the site it could be relatively substantial.
- It was noted that any redevelopment could be a lengthy process as with Quartermile.
- It was noted that any redevelopment of the Redford Barracks could be expected to impact on the communities of Colinton, Fairmilehead, Craiglockhart and Firrhill.
- EA suggested there could be an opportunity to deliver veterans’ housing as part of any redevelopment.
- DC confirmed that the scale of the site was comparable to some of the green-belt releases made in the adopted Local Development Plan. However, it is considerably more constrained.
- There is at present nothing to prevent the Ministry of Defence selling Redford Barracks to a third party which it was suggested would not be in the interests of the community.

Actions

- Circulate a map of Redford Barracks.
- Consider the potential for incorporating veterans’ housing in any redevelopment of Redford Barracks.
- Review the prior work carried out by Fiona Kell.
- Circulate the letters received from Philip Hammond MSP and Lt Col Doug Mackay.
- Reconvene the group in approximately six months unless circumstances dictate otherwise.
- Invite the Defence Infrastructure Organisation to the next meeting to provide clarity on the scale, timing and nature of the proposed closure and sale and potential redevelopment.

Recd 15 MAR 17

From Lieutenant Colonel D J Mackay RA
Commander



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Mr David K R Bewsey
Secretary
Colinton Community Council
2b Redford Gardens
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13th March 2017

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 3rd February about the proposed closure of Redford Barracks and please accept my apologies for the delay in responding. I completely understand Colinton Community Council's disappointment regarding the announcement of the closure and the effect that this might have on Colinton and the surrounding communities.

As you know, in November last year the MOD announced a number of sites for release as part of the Better Defence Estates Strategy (BDES). This strategy is a wide review of MOD land across the UK, with a view to delivering a more efficient, modern and capability-focused Defence Estate. This inevitably means reducing the size of the estate – not least because the Armed Forces are smaller than when much of the Estate was built - and 91 sites are to be released by 2040. 8 of those sites are in Scotland and, as you know, Redford Barracks is due to be released by 2022. We are assured that the money from the sale of the sites will be reinvested back into Defence. The intention is to create areas of military expertise that support Service Personnel in primary hubs, including HMNB Clyde, RAF Lossiemouth and Leuchars Army Barracks.

By way of an update to the BDES announcement, I can pass on a number of things.

First, 3 RIFLES (who you may recall moved from Redford Barracks to Dreghorn Barracks in 2014) are in the process of taking on a new role, which will see the battalion increase in size by around 160 personnel. In order to accommodate the additional personnel, a Company from 3 RIFLES will be moving back into Redford Barracks over the next few months.

Second, as part of the latest Army restructuring (known as 'Army 2020 Refine'), 3 RIFLES are to move completely from Dreghorn (and Redford) Barracks to Catterick in 2021. It is yet to be announced which unit will replace them in Dreghorn Barracks, but it seems very likely that it will be another infantry battalion.

Third, the BDES announcement included the release of Craigiehall Camp, which is due to close in 2018. Significant work is currently underway to determine where the Craigiehall lodgers will be relocated. The EOD (Bomb Disposal) Troop will move to a new purpose-built facility at Dreghorn Barracks in mid-2018, however we are looking at options for the relocation of the remaining personnel; Redford Barracks is a realistic option for them.

In the short term, therefore, it is likely that usage of Redford Barracks will be increased, at least until 2022. Although we are working on the assumption that the Barracks will close then, I can tell you that other possible options are still being considered. Until this process is complete, recommendations are made and decisions are taken at a much higher level, however, I cannot say anything else on the matter.

I note that you have written to Paul Lawrence. I met with Paul recently and had a very useful discussion regarding Redford Barracks; I am pleased that the Local Authority is taking a keen interest in the current and future use of the site. I will remain engaged with Paul over the coming months and keep him informed of any further developments.

Finally, I chair a 6-monthly Garrison Welfare Meeting, at which an update on Basing and Army Restructuring is an agenda item. Colinton Community Council would be very welcome to send a representative to the next meeting, which is scheduled for 4th May. If you would like to do so, please let me know and I will ask Hayley Gibb to provide you with further details nearer the time.

I hope this helps give you a slightly clearer picture of what is happening and will try my best to keep you up to date with developments.

Yours sincerely,

Doug Mackay



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4.6.1

March 2017

I write further to my visit to Scotland on 3 February 2017 where we discussed a number of issues and I offered to follow up on these matters.

As discussed my officials are investigating the options available for the future of the MOD Guard Service (MGS). The project will fully explore and develop options for getting the best out of unarmed guarding and examine whether value for money is being provided across Defence. Although this project is not dependent on other Ministry of Defence (MOD) transformation activities, it supports the MOD's on-going efforts to improve efficiency and value for money so resources can be focused on front line capability.

While it is too early to determine who might provide the service in the future, I can assure you that the quality of service provided by the MGS will be taken into consideration alongside value for money. MGS senior staff, Trade Unions and security representatives across MOD sites have been, and will continue, to be fully engaged in this process. I must make clear that security remains a priority for the department and no decisions will be taken to compromise the security of our personnel and assets.

On eligibility to access higher education funding support, the current policy agreed with the relevant authorities across all four of the home countries is (broadly) that eligibility for the children of service personnel is determined by the home country in which the serving parent joined the armed forces. For example if you signed-up in Scotland, then you would be eligible for Scotland's levels of support. The exception to this is where a serving member of the armed forces establishes permanent residence in a different home country to where they signed up. We have been made aware of a potential issue in how 'permanent residency' is being assessed by the relevant authorities in Scotland – and in particular whether time spent in Service Family Accommodation qualifies. My officials are currently seeking to clarify and resolve this point with the Scottish authorities.

However, as highlighted above, the overarching policy is one followed consistently by each of the home nations and is therefore not a Scotland specific issue. The relatively attractive offer for funded higher education tuition fees in Scottish Universities makes the Scottish scenario stand out. We must also consider that

Councillor Jason Rust
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Wales also has similarly devolved powers and currently offers a tuition fee grant of up to circa £5,000. In contrast to Scotland, however, this offer of tuition fee support is extended to students intending on accessing university courses outside of Wales, not just in Welsh Universities.

My officials are engaging with the relevant authorities across all of the home countries with a view to changing the policy to eligibility being determined by the home country in which the service person joined unless and until they meet the residency requirements of another home country.

The MOD Education Support Fund (ESF) was established in 2010 to provide £3M per annum to mitigate the adverse impacts of family mobility and/or parental deployment on the educational attainment and achievement of Service pupils in state schools across the UK. Responsibility for disbursing the ESF was delegated to the MOD Directorate for Children and Young People. In November 2013 it was increased to £6M per annum and the duration was extended up to and including the Financial Year 2017/2018.

The ESF is disbursed on the basis of an annual bidding round open to schools and local authorities. Bids are initially assessed by Regional ESF Funding Panels before final scrutiny and endorsement by the MOD ESF Funding Panel. The Regional ESF Funding Panel for Scotland includes representatives from the Scottish government, the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, the Royal Caledonian Education Trust, and the MOD.

To answer the questions raised on Redford Barracks I can confirm that the intent is to dispose of the whole Redford site but the specifics and practicalities are subject to detailed assessment studies and consultation. The estimated disposal date for both Redford Cavalry and Infantry Barracks is 2022. There is currently no timeframe for when marketing of the site may commence as this is subject to the outcome of the continuing assessment studies.

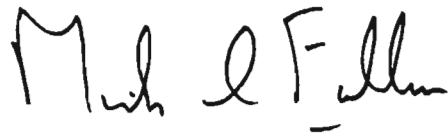
The Redford Barracks complex is largely populated by minor units, lodgers and reserve units with nearby Dreghorn being the location of the largest unit in Edinburgh; 3RIFLES. Inchdrewer House, the School of Piping and Highland Drumming, and Edinburgh University Officer Training Corp are within the Redford complex along with a medical centre, Army Reserve Training Centre for Scotland, a resettlement facility and various welfare amenities.

During the assessment phase for Scotland we will identify receiver sites for each of the capabilities in the Redfords. Options at present include relocation locally to Dreghorn or another suitable site and transitional enclaving of Inchdrewer House. To reiterate our intent is to dispose of the whole Redford site, however the analysis phase may suggest that elements may be enclaved either on an enduring basis or as a result of phased disposal.

All Military personnel will be relocated with their unit or re-assigned in accordance with existing career management procedures. Reservist personnel will be managed

in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment and existing policy and processes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mich Fallon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

THE RT HON SIR MICHAEL FALLON KCB MP