

Ministry of Defence Base Review

The City of Edinburgh Council

25 August 2011

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report explores the implications for the city should the Ministry of Defence proceed with its decision to close army bases at Redford, Dreghorn and Craigiehall and to establish a new army base at Kirknewton.

2 Summary

- 2.1 On 18 July 2011, the Ministry of Defence published the Defence Basing Review (DBR) which sets out a number of recommendations for the restructuring of the national defence estate to reflect the changes to the structure of the Armed Forces.
- 2.2 At a Scottish level, if implemented, these changes will see an overall increase in the number of military personnel recruited, trained and based in Scotland. At a city level the overall number of personnel will rise by around 300-500. There will be a change in the location of bases with the proposed closure of Redford, Dreghorn and Craigiehall and the creation of a new large base at Kirknewton.
- 2.3 The initial timetable indicates that the Ministry of Defence wish to have the base disposals completed by 2014/15 and the new base operational by 2016/17.
- 2.4 The Council will work with all relevant parties including the Ministry of Defence, Scottish Government, West Lothian Council and NHS Lothian amongst others to manage the impacts of these changes. Key areas for consideration include planning, local economic impact, transport, education, environmental and community facilities and housing.
- 2.5 The position on many of these issues is still unclear as further information is awaited from the Ministry of Defence. Updates are expected in September and December 2011.

3 Main report

Background

- 3.1 In 2010 the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) made a number of recommendations for the reconfiguration of the Armed Forces. Decisions were taken to reconfigure the Army into five multi-role brigades, structure the RAF around fewer fast jet platforms and re-deploy British forces personnel currently based in Germany, back to the UK.
- 3.2 Following from the SDSR, the Ministry of Defence gave consideration to the implications for its defence estate and in July 2011 published the Defence Basing Review. At national level, the overall impact of the DBR is that some 6,500-7,000 army personnel currently based in Germany will be relocating to Scotland and these personnel along with other troops relocated from within the UK will form one of the five multi-role brigades. Overall, the number of Scottish based defence personnel (Army, Navy and RAF) will increase by over 2,000 posts.

Implications for Edinburgh

- 3.3 Should the decisions be implemented, at an Edinburgh level the impact will be the closure of Craighall Camp (home to HQ 2nd Division), Redford and Dreghorn Barracks (home to the 3rd Battalion, The Rifles and the 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, Royal Scots Borderers respectively). The units based at these sites will be accommodated at other locations.
- 3.4 At this stage the indication from the Ministry of Defence is that it expects to retain the existing married quarters accommodation in the Redford/Dreghorn area.
- 3.5 The multi-role brigade will be largely stationed at a new base in Kirknewton. This base will be developed on the military airfield which is currently home to an air cadet gliding school. Although the village of Kirknewton lies in West Lothian, the airfield lies just within the boundary of the City of Edinburgh.

Response to date

- 3.6 Contact has been made with the Scottish Government Defence Policy Team who are, in the first instance, co-ordinating contact with the Ministry of Defence. The issues raised in this report have been put to Scottish Government/Ministry of Defence and where a response has been received, the information is provided here. Where information is not yet known we will continue to work with Scottish Government/Ministry of Defence to provide this.

Planning Context

- 3.7 There are a number of Planning issues associated both with the closure and subsequent redevelopment of the existing bases as well as the provision of the new base. The Ministry of Defence has been encouraged to engage with Planning as soon as possible to begin to explore these issues in detail. In particular key initial considerations include the:

- Need to engage in the Local Development Plan process;
- Listed Building Status of a number of the key buildings to be disposed off including Grade A property at Craigiehall, Grade B properties at Redford and Grade C properties at Dreghorn;
- Location of Craigiehall in the greenbelt and within a Designed Landscape and adjacent to a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation;
- Location of Redford in the Colinton Conservation Area and Dreghorn's location bounded by an Area of Great Landscape Value and Local Nature Conservation Site;
- Kirknewton's location in a Countryside Area.

Economic Development Impact

- 3.8 The Scottish Government is currently working with the Ministry of Defence to evaluate the national economic development implications of the Defence Basing Review. Once this more detailed information is available, the Council will work with the Scottish Government/Ministry of Defence to fully understand the position at a city-wide level.
- 3.9 Across the city it is likely that the overall number of army personnel who are permanently based and train in the city will rise by around 300-500 from the 1,400 currently based here. Therefore, at a city level it can be reasonably assumed that the net economic benefit to the city will be positive. It is noted that the location of the new base at Kirknewton is close to the boundary with West Lothian so there could also be some leakage of expenditure to the West Lothian economy. At the City Region level the impact is likely to remain positive.
- 3.10 In addition the redevelopment of the existing bases should have a positive local economic impact. The new uses for the bases are not yet known but it is likely that residential/employment/tourism/leisure uses will emerge as proposals. All of these uses can have positive benefits for the city.
- 3.11 There are, however, likely to be some negative economic impacts at a very local level, particularly around the Redford/Dreghorn area. The loss of military personnel could impact negatively on local businesses, shops and services particularly in the Oxfords and Colinton area. This negative impact is however likely to be reduced if the existing married quarters premises remain and once the redevelopment of the bases is completed.

Housing

- 3.12 Whilst future uses of the sites are not yet clear, it is likely that residential development proposals will come forward. If this is the case, then the Council's Affordable Housing Policy will apply to ensure that new housing development meets the needs of the whole community.

Education and Community Facilities

- 3.13 Initial considerations from the Children and Families Service are primarily concerned with the impact of possible base closures on local schools and services; particularly Colinton Primary and Firrhill Secondary schools. Initial discussions with Scottish Government indicate the Ministry of Defence's intention to retain all existing married quarters in Redford/Dreghorn area. If this is the case then the impact on local schools would be minimal.
- 3.14 The nature and profile of the occupants of the new base at Kirknewton is not yet known and therefore the impact on local schools cannot currently be assessed. The location of the base on the Edinburgh/West Lothian border means that there could be implications for both education authorities. This will be kept under review and we will work jointly with West Lothian Council on this matter.

Transport

- 3.15 The key transport issues associated with the announcement are primarily related to the new base at Kirknewton as any proposed intensification of use on this site will have a significant impact on the surrounding road network including the level crossing. The site lies just off the A70 and is also accessed from the A71 via the B7301 through the village of Kirknewton. It will be essential to work jointly with the Ministry of Defence and West Lothian Council in considering the transport implications of the proposals as they emerge.

Timescales

- 3.16 At this stage there is no firm or detailed timetable from the Ministry of Defence. It has indicated that they expect the bases to be disposed of by 2014/15. Craigiehall is potentially the first of the sites to be disposed of as its role as 2nd Division HQ is being disbanded in 2012.
- 3.17 The Kirknewton base is expected to be operational by 2016/17.
- 3.18 The Ministry of Defence has advised that additional information regarding the likely timetable will be available in September 2011. Further details of what is planned at Kirknewton with regards to numbers and timings are expected by the end of 2011.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are currently no known financial implications for the City of Edinburgh Council. This position will be kept under review as more details of the timing and nature of the implementation of the decisions are known.

5 Equalities Impact

- 5.1 There is no direct equalities impact arising from this report.

6 Environmental Impact

- 6.1 The Ministry of Defence decisions, if implemented, will have environmental impacts. The nature and scale of these impacts will emerge as the projects develop. Due to the potential scale of the developments, it is likely that an Environmental Impact Assessment will be required as part of the Planning Application. The Council will work with the Ministry of Defence at all stages to ensure that environmental impact is minimised.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The UK wide Defence Basing Review will have implications for Edinburgh in terms of the closure of Redford/Dreghorn and Craigiehall Army Bases and the creation of a new base at Kirknewton. This will result in an overall net increase in the number of army personnel based in the city.
- 7.2 There will be local impacts of these decisions in terms of housing, education, transport, economic development and planning. The Council will work with the Ministry of Defence and other partners including Scottish Government, West Lothian Council and NHS Lothian to minimise any adverse impacts of the decision on local communities.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- a) Notes the contents of this report.
 - b) Requests the Director of City Development to continue to engage with the Ministry of Defence and Scottish Government to understand the timings and implications of the Defence Basing Review.
 - c) Requests that officers form a cross service working group, led by the Head of Economic Development, to co-ordinate Council response on these issues.

Dave Anderson
Director of City Development

Appendices

Contact/tel/Email Fiona Kell Tel: 529 3106
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Wards affected Ward 1 – Almond
Ward 2 - Pentland Hills
Ward 8 - Colinton/Fairmilehead

Single Outcome Agreement Supports Local Outcomes:

- Edinburgh is a thriving, growing city with a high quality of life and environment and a prosperous economy;
- People in Edinburgh have access to a range of affordable homes;
- Edinburgh’s natural and built environment is supported and enhanced.

Background Papers MoD Basing Review
<http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06038>