

7 September 2022

The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

Letter sent via email to: [:defencesecretary-group@mod.gov.uk](mailto:defencesecretary-group@mod.gov.uk)

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to urge the Ministry of Defence to fulfil its leaseholder obligations for the maintenance and repair of Castle Armoury in Bury, which has been closed with very short notice on safety grounds.

Castle Armoury is an important part of the current identity and history of Bury. It is an iconic building in the centre of a town with a proud military heritage which is owned by the Bury Castle Armoury Trust and leased to NW RFCA. Through this formal agreement, the armoury is home to Bury Fusiliers, known as W Company 5th Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, as well as a centre for 207 Field Hospital Royal Army Medical Corp. The armoury is also home to the Lancashire Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Volunteer Band, the base for our Army Cadets, RAF Cadets, a community karate group, and one of the Borough's armed forces veterans breakfast clubs.

Under the terms of the lease NW RFCA and, in turn, the Ministry of Defence assume full responsibility for repairs and maintenance. Earlier this month all activity at Castle Armoury was, however, suspended due to the building being unsafe.

At its meeting on 20th July 2022, Bury Council passed an emergency motion unanimously to urge the Ministry of Defence to provide the necessary funds to make Castle Armoury safe again and to modernise it, in accordance with the leaseholder agreement.

The Council is working with its voluntary and community sector, the Armed Forces Champion and the Chair of Bury Castle Armoury Trust to look at what external funding may be available. This does not however excuse the Ministry of Defence from its obligations in the lease of full responsibility for repairs and maintenance.

We look forward to a reply confirming that the monies will be provided as quickly as possible so that it can be re-opened at the heart of the community which it serves.

Yours Sincerely,



Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Leader, Bury Council



Councillor Richard Gold
Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities
Armed Forces Champion




Cllr Russell Bernstein
Leader of Bury Conservatives



Cllr Mike Smith
Leader of Radcliffe First



Christian Wakeford
Member of Parliament for Bury South



James Daly
Member of Parliament for Bury North