



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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THE RT HON ALEC SHELBRooke MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

4/6/21/ap

5 October 2022

Dear Cllr Eamonn,

Thank you for your correspondence of 7 September 2022, regarding the lack of maintenance and repairs to Castle Armoury in Bury, which I understand has recently resulted in the closure of the building on safety grounds.

Whilst I recognise the importance of Castle Armoury to the identity and history of Bury, the safety of the Service personnel who use the site is of the utmost priority to the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The degree of repairs required to the building is extensive and includes the complete replacement of both the existing roof covering and the gas heating system, in addition to a complete electrical rewire. I'm sure you will appreciate this level of work will require considerable funding.

Regrettably, the Reserve Forces and Cadets' Association (RFCA) is only funded by MOD to undertake Mandatory Inspections and Tests and very limited reactive maintenance of the Estate, and, it was for this reason, that the Head of Establishment made the difficult decision to close the building and re-locate the reserve and cadet units which are housed there.

Over the next few months, further work will be undertaken by the MOD, and the RFCA, to determine the level of works required at the site. Pending this work being undertaken, I regret to inform you that there are no plans to reopen the site.

I was pleased to hear that the Council is working with its voluntary and community sector, the Armed Forces Champion and the Chair of Bury Council Armoury Trust to explore any external funding which may be available. The RFCA is also engaging with the Trust and will continue to participate in meetings with local stakeholders.

I trust my response explains the Department's position on this matter.

THE RT HON ALEC SHELBRooke MP

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Leader
Bury Council
Department for Corporate Core Services

Copy to:

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