

From: Major General D W Southall CBE



Army Headquarters
Army Basing & Infrastructure
IDL 416
Marlborough Lines
Monxton Road
ANDOVER
SP11 8HJ

Civil: 01264 383122
Military: 94391 3122
E-mail: david.southall203@mod.gov.uk

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Dear [redacted]

I write in response to your correspondence regarding the proposed Royal Artillery Museum and to update you on the Army's position. I thank you for sharing your concerns and would wish to reassure you we remain committed to ensure such concerns are fully addressed by all key stakeholders.

For background context, I note The Royal Artillery Museum, a Charity and Limited Company, has sought a permanent home for its heritage collection since the closure of the Woolwich Museum in 2016. The Army remains unequivocally committed to support the Royal Artillery in this endeavour and wishes only to secure the right location for their Project. I also note a number of site options have been previously considered by The Royal Artillery Museum and Wiltshire Council, with some proving untenable due to planning considerations or other factors.

At the request of Royal Artillery Museum, the Army has offered to lease Avon Camp West as a potential site for the Museum and Wiltshire County Council to consider. The Army has not sought to judge the suitability or viability of this site from a planning perspective. As with any planning proposal, this remains the responsibility of the County Council to consider as has been the case with previous site options.

Thus, the Army's offer of the Avon Camp West site is wholly contingent upon both submission of a planning application from The Royal Artillery Museum and subsequently their securing of planning consent. Whilst I understand a formal full planning application from The Royal Artillery Museum is still awaited, I have confirmed with the Wiltshire County Council Chief Executive Officer that planning approval for any such application will be dependent on two key factors: any proposal must ensure public concerns are addressed and critically, any proposal must carry an appropriate level of local community public support with the consolidated views of the Parish Councils key.

Given the site is contentious, with significant vocal support both for and against the proposal, I have also secured agreement from the Wiltshire County Council Chief Executive to ensure the local community is formally consulted in a council led consultation process. In addition, the Council has confirmed that any such application would be considered in a Council Strategic Planning Committee and not by an individual planning officer. The Army continues to review alternate site options for consideration by The Royal Artillery Museum and Wiltshire County Council should Avon Camp West be unsuitable.

To directly inform and influence any planning application for Avon Camp West, I would strongly suggest you consider formally lodging your views with the Wiltshire County Council Chief Executive Officer, Mr Alistair Cunningham OBE. This will ensure the Council fully considers your concerns should a formal planning application submission be received. You may also wish to consider copying such correspondence to the Regimental Headquarters of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, for attention of the Master Gunner and the Royal Artillery Museum Project Chairman.

Yours,
David