Dr Peter Prinsley MP MD FRCS
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Dear Resident,

I am writing to update you on the Government's proposal to use RAF Barnham to accommodate up to 1,250 asylum seekers while their claims are processed.

I know that many local residents have strong views about this proposal. Since it became public, I have been working to ensure that those views are heard clearly by Government and that the interests of our local communities remain at the forefront of any decision-making.

Over recent weeks, I have met with Barnham Parish Council, the senior leadership team at Barnham Primary School, the Leader of West Suffolk Council, the Leader of Suffolk County Council, local councillors and other community stakeholders to hear first-hand the concerns that have been raised. I have also raised the proposal in Parliament, where I pressed Ministers on how local views would be taken into account, and I have written directly to the Home Secretary seeking detailed answers on behalf of local residents.

My letter asked for clear assurances on a wide range of issues, including public safety, security, healthcare, transport, environmental safety, community cohesion, consultation, and what support would be available both for local communities and for those accommodated on the site.

Throughout this process, I have been clear that local people deserve a genuine opportunity to have their views heard. A proposal of this scale should only proceed following meaningful consultation and with full consideration of its impact on the local area.

Having listened carefully to local representatives and organisations, I do not believe that RAF Barnham is the right location for this proposal.

My concerns are numerous. The site is isolated, with poor transport links and no safe pedestrian route to Thetford. There are legitimate questions about the impact on local public services and whether the location is suitable for successful community integration. The site's military history, including the presence of unexploded ordnance and historic contamination, also requires the highest level of scrutiny and reassurance.

I am equally concerned about the potential environmental impact. RAF Barnham lies close to nationally important heathland and forms part of an area that supports one of the UK's most significant breeding populations of stone-curlews, a rare and protected species. Any

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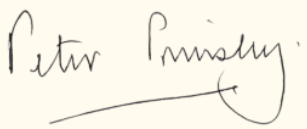
proposal must fully consider its effect on these sensitive habitats and the wider natural environment.

I support the Government's objective of ending the costly use of asylum hotels and tackling dangerous irregular migration. Britain should continue to offer sanctuary to those fleeing war and persecution. However, achieving those objectives should not come at the expense of choosing the wrong location. In my view, RAF Barnham is not an appropriate site for accommodating such a large number of asylum seekers.

As your Member of Parliament, I will continue to represent the views of local residents, press Ministers for answers, and argue for a solution that is fair both to those seeking refuge and to the communities expected to host them.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to contact me and share their views. I will continue to keep residents updated as this proposal develops.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Peter Prinsley MP
Member of Parliament for Bury St Edmunds & Stowmarket