



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Kevin Foster MP
Minister for Future Borders and Immigration
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

7th September 2021

Dear Kevin,

RE: Reopening of Jaguar House, Norfolk

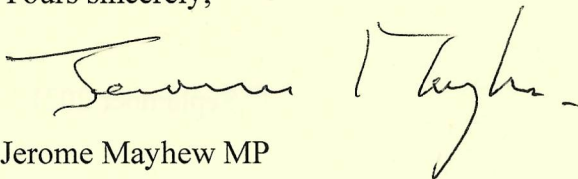
I understand Serco and the Home Office are considering reopening Jaguar House, Badgersfield and that you have taken over the responsibility from Chris Philp MP, the Minister previously responsible for this decision. Having discussed this extensively with the previous Minister, I wanted to highlight to you the reasons why I think reopening would be a very significant mistake:

- To reopen now would fly in the face of the undertakings Chris Philp MP gave me during the last opening that the building would only be used as part of the emergency response to Covid and would be closed as soon as that crisis had passed. Local residents accepted the explanation that this was a temporary facility to house asylum seekers as we tried to cope with the opening stages of the first wave.
- The reasons why the Home Office took the decision to close the centre are still present:
 - It is still located in a rural community, where the numbers of asylum seekers will have a disproportionate impact on a largely elderly small village community. As you said to me when we last discussed this location, it is in the interests of asylum seekers to be housed in urban locations where they have access to increased facilities as well as to local immigrant communities and do not excite significant negative reactions from the local population;
 - There are no shops or any other facilities in the village. This means that any resident would have to walk three miles along unlit road without pavement to reach a shop or medical facilities. There is no public transport. As the days get shorter this will become a greater issue;
 - When previously used the Government provided funding for health facilities to be provided on-site twice a week. However, this funding is no longer being offered by the Home Office, placing competing strain on the small rural general practice.

- Last time round local residents showed great compassion and acceptance because they were told that this was a temporary response to a crisis. I do not believe that this explanation would any longer be accepted, leading to very significant and prolonged local opposition. All responsible local and regional stakeholders who have been consulted have unanimously responded negatively to the proposal, including the Police, Fire Service, Broadland District Council, Norfolk County Council, the local resident's association, District and County Councillors and myself.

There is currently a high degree of concern over these proposals. For all the reasons above it is clear that Jaguar House is not a suitable location for this kind of use. Consequently, I would be grateful if we could meet as soon as possible to discuss all of the above.

Yours sincerely,



Jerome Mayhew MP