Alex Norris MP
Minister of State (Home Office)
House of Commons
London
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By email:
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11 December 2025

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Dear Minister Norris

Thank you for your letter dated 11 December 2025.

In your letter you say *"After liaising with your office, the earliest, suitable date for all parties is 13 January 2026. Based on the response from your office, no concerns were raised about the proposed date"*. With respect, this was the earliest date the Council was offered by your office and to imply that earlier dates had been ruled out by this Council is just plain wrong. Our letter of 4 December remains valid. When we met with you, we all agreed to meet regularly and to work at pace to ensure the impact on our community was fully understood in your planning. We stand ready to meet with you before Christmas.

When we met on 25 November 2025, you gave us your commitment that your team would "*get to us what you've got*" in relation to all the background paperwork and assessments, even if they were still in draft format. In your letter today, you also state that *"Home Office officials are working at pace to acquiesce your request for documentation relating to Crowborough Training Camp and are due to discuss this with council officials imminently."* The document we have received today from your team does expressly the opposite. It confirms that very few documents will be shared and then only once they are completed (so not in draft) and only after you have made your decision to proceed with the site. It says that many documents will not to be shared at all. Please can you urgently investigate why your officials are not following your instructions in this regard?

As you will no doubt be aware, there is very significant and rising community tension about the Home Office's plans. We are really worried about this. Specifically, there was an incident outside the camp on Tuesday evening that required police intervention and ended with a man being arrested for assault The cause of this is the lack of any communication from the Home Office with local residents. The resulting vacuum is inevitably being filled by speculation and misinformation. This fuels fear and local people are genuinely scared and concerned. Whilst in no way condoning violent protest, you need to insist that your team start providing timely, accurate and regular information to the community to stop these tensions rising any more.

With Christmas fast approaching, we have very significant concerns around the potential for your decision and possible use of the site to take place at a time when the focus of the local community should be on coming together and having peaceful family time. This is a challenging period for local service providers, particularly Sussex Police and the NHS as they balance complex pressures and their teams reasonable expectation of a break with their families. Whilst we understand that you and your team do not want to enter into a running commentary on the timetable for your final decision, given these specific issues, we invite you to clarify that you have no intention of ruining Christmas for our community and those that work tirelessly to protect and care for us and confirm that no decision will be made before the 5th January at the very earliest.

Yours sincerely

Cllr James Partridge
Leader of the Council and Governance, Waste and Local Economy Portfolio Holder

Cllr Rachel Millward
Deputy Leader of the Council and Culture, Community and Communications Portfolio Holder