Wealden
District Council

Ms Nusrat Ghani MP
MP for Sussex Weald and Deputy Speaker
and Chairman of Ways and Means
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

By email: nusrat.ghani.mp@parliament.uk

4 November 2025
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Dear Ms Nusrat Ghani MP
CC: Ms Mims Davies MP, Dr Kieran Mullan MP

We acknowledge your letter of the 29th October 2025. Unfortunately, it is full of misinformation and misleading assertions.

Wealden District Council has not agreed anything with the Home Office. In fact, we were not even told the decision before the public announcement. This is a decision of the Home Office made by the relevant Minister without consultation with this, or any other, council. Your repeated claim that Wealden District Council have been in secret negotiations with the Home Office, and that we have it exclusively within our power to stop the use of the camp is both deeply misleading and profoundly unhelpful for our communities. At a time when tensions run high across the nation on the subject of immigration, the complete failure of the Home Office to communicate their plans with the public has led to much public anxiety about being kept in the dark and not properly considered. Your fabricated blame of Wealden District Council has merely escalated community tensions and led to personal attack.

As you will be aware, the County Council were in the same confidential briefing as our senior offices on October 10th, and the Home Office informed our officers that Sussex Police and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service would also be brought into confidence.

As you are also aware, this council wrote to the Home Office with a detailed list of concerns, including an emphasis on the need for thorough communication and community engagement, questions about resourcing public services at a time when they are already under strain, and concerns for the occupation and well-being of asylum seekers given their lack of right to work. We did not receive a response to this letter, but civil servants did indicate to our officers that a full communications plan and community engagement programme would be conducted before the decision was made. We are appalled that our communities have been so badly let down already.

When the news broke, you immediately anointed Wealden District Council as the lead agency. You also spoke with absolute certainty that the site is not credible. We ask that you share with us the evidence that you have for this, and the previous assessments that led to

the successful use of the site for 250 Afghan refugees from December 2023 to November 2024.

You have repeatedly asserted to the public that we have planning powers to stop this project. But you are aware the Crowborough Training Camp is Crown land and the Home Office have availed themselves of the exemption this affords to not submit a planning application. Despite your public assertion to the contrary, it is not possible to issue a stop notice when planning law has not been breached.

It is worth noting that whilst we share community services with the County Council, none of our other statutory services will be directly required. The County Council however will be involved with regards to adult social care and public health; this page highlights the support they give to migrants: https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/supporting-refugees/migrants

We believe that the Police have already applied for more funding to resource consequent local need but do not have any further information on concessions. The District Council will not have any responsibility with regard to adapting or managing the site.

Now that the record is set straight, we ask that you consider working constructively with this council, the County Council, the Police and Fire Services - to share information, to assess the suitability of the home offices proposal and to consider options and next steps.
We firmly believe that when challenges arise, we should work cross-party for the good of our communities. In the absence of any such action from the Home Office, we have already invited the County Council, Police and Fire Services to a meeting, as well as requesting that the Home Office attend a public meeting. We are also seeking legal advice as to whether there are any avenues to challenge the decision of the Home Office.

We invite you to attend a meeting with us at your earliest convenience to begin this new way of working together. Our communities deserve the best of us.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

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

[redacted]

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