

Date: 8 November 2010
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**Greater Cambridge and
Greater Peterborough
Local Enterprise Partnership**
c/o Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce
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The Right Honourable Liam Fox MP
Secretary of State for Defence
MOD Ministerial Correspondence Unit
5th Floor, Zone A
Main Building
Whitehall, London
SW1A 2HB

8th November 2010

Dear Secretary of State

RAF Marham

I write as Chair of the Greater Cambridge-Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership Project Board to express our strong support for the retention of RAF Marham as a front line jet fighter flying base.

Our local enterprise partnership area has already heard that it is to suffer the closure of RAF Wittering and RAF Cottesmore next year as a result of the withdrawal of Harrier from service. The closure of these two bases will have a serious detrimental impact on our local economy, and any downgrade of activity at or closure of RAF Marham will have a devastating compounding effect.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of RAF Marham to much of Norfolk. It is the largest employer in West Norfolk by a considerable margin, accounting for approximately one in 12 of the employed jobs in the Borough. Conservative estimates indicate that it contributes more than £130 million each year directly to the local economy. Just as importantly RAF Marham provides a large number of well-paid highly skilled technical jobs in an area that is characterised by low skill levels and have pay levels well below national averages.

The loss of RAF Marham will have a devastating effect on not just direct employment and business activity locally, but also on the retail and service sectors, leisure, education and healthcare providers which serve the overall RAF Marham 'community' which numbers some 8,000 people.

RAF Marham already has a sufficient critical mass of infrastructure and functions that it acts as a 'centre of excellence' for fast jet operations. In particular the innovative public-private partnership with BAE Systems and Rolls Royce which services the entire RAF Tornado fleet at Marham, bringing substantial and ongoing cost savings to the MOD and operational efficiency benefits to the RAF. It seems logical that the

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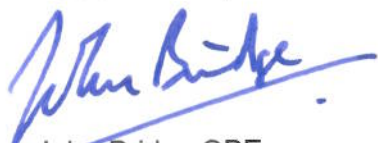
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RAF should build on this critical mass and excellence now and into the future, rather than having to bear the expense and effort of having to recreate it elsewhere.

I hope that you will agree that it makes sense to retain the full capability of RAF Marham for operational reasons, and also that it would be inequitable to close a third RAF base within the Greater Cambridge-Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership area.

Yours sincerely



John Bridge OBE
Chairman

Greater Cambridge-Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership Project Board