

LUKE POLLARD MP
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE READINESS AND INDUSTRY

25 March 2026

Dear Clive,

Thank you to you and the Select Committee for taking the time to visit the Defence Housing Estate at Emsworth, Portsmouth on 11 March 2025 and your subsequent letter dated 17 March 2025. I hope the visit proved helpful and offered a valuable insight into the future direction of military housing under the Defence Housing Strategy, to be driven by the creation of the Defence Housing Service as part of the Armed Forces Bill.

While Al Carns, the Minister for Armed Forces, is leading on the Armed Forces Bill, I have responsibility for Service Family Accommodation (SFA). I am therefore responding in my capacity as the Minister accountable for this area.

As I am sure you will appreciate, we are in the early stages of our renovation programme and are currently trialling a range of approaches to determine which delivers the best value for money. Given the range of property age and condition across our estate, each requires a very different scope of work, and not all will require the same level of refurbishment.

As outlined during the initial briefing by the lead Official, David Brewer, the average cost of returning these properties is approximately £80,000. Annex A provides further detail, setting out the typical average cost of components which may be required across the renovation programme.

I understand during the visit, the Committee attended three different properties of varying standards; [REDACTED] was the property at the highest standard to which I believe you refer to in your letter. The refurbishment work at this property exceeds that of the average, because it includes enhancements, we are currently trialling in some homes, such as electrical vehicle charging capability.

Disclosing incumbent tenderers' rates could distort the market, influence bidder behaviour, and risk challenge under the Procurement Act 2023, including potential claims or findings of contract ineffectiveness. The Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) Accommodation contracts run until March 2029, and preparatory work for their replacement is already under way to ensure continuity and to maintain proper governance. Protecting this sensitive commercial information is therefore essential to

Clive Efford MP
Chair, Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill
House of Commons
Palace of West Minster
London
SW1A 0AA

uphold competitive tension and the integrity of the forthcoming procurement. For these reasons, the Department is unable to provide a detailed cost breakdown of renovation work on individual properties.

The creation of the Defence Housing Service strengthens Defence's commercial position by opening up wider routes to market and supplementing the core FDIS delivery model through access to established housing-sector frameworks. This introduces competitive tension not previously available to Defence, provides market-tested pricing, and enables access to additional specialist capacity to accelerate priority work. By drawing on multiple frameworks, the Defence Housing Service can fill capability gaps, improve cost assurance, and increase delivery agility, ultimately driving better value for money and improved outcomes for Service families.

With expanded routes to market and a competitive tender for the future FDIS contracts beyond 2029, the Defence Housing Service aims to maximise value for money across the large-scale refurbishment programme. While refurbishment costs may appear high, they reflect decades of underinvestment, a fix-on-fail approach, and a previously unaffordable maintenance backlog. Around 50% of the estate is EPC D or below, half the stock was built quickly and cheaply in the 1950s and 1960s, and more than 34,000 of the approximately 48,000 homes are rated fair, poor or bad against modern standards. As a result, the scale and cost of refurbishment extend far beyond cosmetic improvements.

In line with standard departmental balance of investment decision making, where it is uneconomic to refurbish houses, alternative courses of action will be applied; selling houses and building new, buying at affordable homes discount where Section 106 opportunities exist, or even buying directly from the market.

I trust the above explains the Department's position and would like to thank you for your engagement and interest in the work being undertaken to improve Service family housing.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luke', written in a cursive style.

LUKE POLLARD MP

Annex A :

Initial Void Refurbishment Works to	Typical Cost per property £
Kitchen	8341.00
Bathroom	4532.00
Ground floor bathroom	2280.00
Refurb and Demolition Survey	180.00
Heating Systems (typical = full replacement)	8,636.00
Carpets	2578.00
Hard Flooring Ground Floor (rate item /SqM)	99.40
Hard Floor Preparation (rate item /SqM)	19.84
Full Redecoration	3181.00
Curtain (rate item)	2002.00
Curtains Track (rate item)	14.00
Internal doors replacement	1569.00
Wardrobe Doors Internal	671.00
Skirting (rate item/ per lm)	25.24
Architrave (rate item per lm)	40.00
Full internal and external electric inc CCU, switches & EICR	19325.00
Double Socket plate with USB (rate item)	29.00
Double Socket plate without USB (rate item)	17.00
Single Socket Plate (rate item)	16.00
Light Switch (rate item)	14.00
Light switch 2way (rate item)	20.00
Ceiling Light Drop (rate item)	23.00
Light Bulb LED (rate item)	12.00
TV Aerial / Media Plate (rate item)	21.00
Timber Shed (rate item)	811.00
Loft insulation removal old completely, relay new	1127.00
Windows, Doors and Canopies	16947.00
Re-Skim (plaster) all Walls & Ceilings (rate Build up)	6801.00

Additional Works Instructed to	Typical Cost per property
Driveway	1070.00
Facias, Soffits and Rainwater Goods	4500.00
Patio, Steps, Drains	307.00
Electrical Vehicle Charger	1750.00
Fencing	2092.00
Turf Front and Rear Lawns	1351.00
Water Butts	250.00

