



Ein cyf/Our ref:KS/PO/127/2026

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair - Equality and Social Justice committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff,
CF99 1SN

CC: John Griffiths MS
Chair – Local Government and Housing committee

9 March 2026

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your letter of 26 February regarding the Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) on the Armed Forces Bill. I am grateful for the Committee's work on this issue as we seek to embed further our support for the Armed Forces community in Wales. As Minister responsible for the Bill within Welsh Government, I am responding to you and this response has been developed with my colleagues Jayne Bryant, Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government and Rebecca Evans, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning.

I will address the three questions you raised in order below:

1. What discussions has Welsh Government had with the UK Government about providing funding to meet the cost of implementing the Bill?

The funding implications of the Armed Forces Bill 2026 Bill, particularly in relation to Clause 2 (Armed Forces Covenant), have been discussed regularly with UK Government during development of the Bill. On 27 January, I wrote to Minister for the Armed Forces, Al Carns MP, referencing the current position of UK Government that no additional resource is being provided to support public bodies with implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant legal duty of due regard. This was also the UK Government position with the Armed Forces Bill 2021 which first introduced the due regard duty in the areas of health, education and housing for local authorities, local health boards and schools in Wales.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We will continue to engage with UK Government regarding the resource implications of the Bill and monitor and assess these implications with partners in Wales as the Bill develops.

2. What are the views of Welsh Government in relation to Clause 3 and does Welsh Government have any concerns about the potential use of compulsory purchase powers in Wales by the Defence Housing Service (DHS)?

The Welsh Ministers would not have a role in relation to compulsory purchase in Wales which relates to a reserved matter. The proposed functions of the DHS set out in the proposed section 343E within Clause 3 involve the supply and management of housing for defence personnel and their families, which we consider to be reserved. What is a concern is the ancillary functions to dispose of, regenerate or otherwise generate profit from former defence land. Such DHS projects may run counter to established Welsh Government or local authority place making strategies. The lack of role for the Welsh Ministers in confirming compulsory purchase orders that deliver such DHS projects would be one less opportunity to prevent damage to those placemaking strategies, put in place by Welsh bodies.

Despite the above concern, I am reassured that any development brought forward by the DHS would be subject to planning permission. This would need to be sought from planning authorities or on appeal from the Welsh Ministers in the normal way. In order to secure planning permission, DHS would have to engage in the preparation of development plans like any other developer (including the Welsh Government when acting as a developer). The plan preparation process would mean DHS proposals would be aligned with or incorporated within the development plan prepared by public bodies in Wales.

3. Has Welsh Government sought clarification on how the DHS will be expected to work with Welsh Government and local authorities in Wales?

As development undertaken by the DHS will require planning permission, it is expected that DHS will interact with the Welsh Government and local authorities in the same way as any other land developer. While reassurance has not been sought on detailed working arrangements, officials did seek clarification that the DHS would not be given powers within the planning system. Confirmation was provided by UK Government officials that DHS would need to obtain planning permission in the usual way. We will continue to engage with MOD and the DHS (once established) to ensure we have clear ways of working.

Yours sincerely,



Ken Skates AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales