

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Future Basing Requirements at RAF Scampton

I wish to inform the House of the latest position regarding the future basing requirements for the RAF Aerobatic Team (RAFAT) known as the Red Arrows and of the RAF's Air Surveillance and Control System (ASACS) units.

The previous administration announced on 21 May 2008 (Official Report, columns 23WS-24WS), that subject to Trade Union consultation, the RAFAT would in future operate from RAF Waddington, rather than RAF Scampton by 31 July 2011, although they would continue to use the dedicated airspace above RAF Scampton to enable training for their aerobatic displays.

The previous administration announced on 28 October 2008 (Official Report, columns 25WS-26WS), the relocation of two Air Surveillance and Control System satellite units, Number 1 Air Control Centre at RAF Kirton-in-Lindsey and the Control and Reporting Centre at RAF Scampton, to RAF Coningsby by the end of 2014.

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) considered a range of constraints on Defence basing plans - the available estate, funding provision, plans already in train and the operational commitments of forces. In the light of the changes resulting from the SDSR, and against the background of the budgetary pressures Defence faces, I have concluded that it makes sense to review the planned moves of the RAFAT and the Control and Reporting Centre. In the meantime both units remain at RAF Scampton.

No 1 Air Control Centre has now merged and collocated with the Control and Reporting Centre at RAF Scampton and RAF Kirton-in-Lindsey will be closed by the end of March 2012, other than some Service families accommodation and a combined mess for personnel at RAF Scampton.

The RAF will now consider future basing options for both the RAFAT and the ASACS units and make recommendations on options to deliver operational effectiveness and value for money. This will include recommendations on whether RAF Scampton should drawdown by 2014 as previously announced. This work is expected to complete in 2012 and I will report the outcome to Parliament at that time.

Service and civilian personnel at RAF Scampton will be briefed on the progress of this work; we will also engage with the Trade Union.

Thursday 15 December 2011