



YEOVIL WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

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The Rt Hon John Healey MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

20 February 2026

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Dear Secretary of State,

Urgent request to award the NMH contract to Leonardo Helicopters, Yeovil

We write on behalf of the residents of Yeovil and the surrounding parishes to urge the Government to award the New Medium Helicopter (NMH) contract to Leonardo in Yeovil without further delay. We ask that the NMH contract be decoupled from the Defence Investment Plan and awarded now, to secure UK jobs, protect national security, and safeguard sovereign helicopter manufacturing capability.

This letter is submitted by Yeovil Without Parish Council on behalf of the undersigned parish councils listed below. It is written in full support of the recent correspondence from Adam Dance MP, Member of Parliament for Yeovil. We also note and endorse the position set out separately by Yeovil Town Council in its letter dated 10th February 2026 regarding the urgent need for clarity and decisive action.

Our residents have lived with prolonged uncertainty for far too long. Despite repeated assurances that clarity would be delivered through the Defence Investment Plan (DIP), continued delay has placed the future of Leonardo Helicopters UK in Yeovil — and with it the UK's sovereign helicopter manufacturing capability — at serious risk.

Loss of the Yeovil facility, and its UK supply chain, would result in the United Kingdom losing its ability to produce crewed and uncrewed helicopters at a time of increasing global fracture and conflict. Long-standing allies are now regarded with greater caution, and the strategic environment is less predictable than at any point in recent decades. The need for secure, onshore defence manufacturing capability has never been more acute. UK defence procurement policy must place greater value on sovereign capability and economic resilience. Now is the time to secure UK jobs, strengthen the UK economy, and maintain national security by awarding the NMH contract to Leonardo in Yeovil.

We remain deeply concerned that the NMH contract is still tied to the Defence Investment Plan, despite Leonardo having been the sole remaining bidder for over a year. This indecision now threatens the closure of the Yeovil site, with the loss of more than 3,000 highly skilled jobs locally, support for over 12,000 jobs across the regional supply chain, and the removal of approximately £320 million per year from the local economy.

The consequences would extend far beyond immediate job losses. Yeovil's helicopter manufacturing heritage has sustained a unique and highly skilled workforce for generations. The loss of the NMH programme would accelerate the erosion of specialist engineering skills, apprenticeships, and training pathways that cannot be easily rebuilt once dismantled. Leonardo's significant and long-standing investment in skills, education, and apprenticeships — including sustained funding and partnership working that directly benefits Yeovil and the wider area — would be lost.

This skills ecosystem underpins the future of our town. Without a thriving high-value manufacturing employer, the incentive to attract and retain highly skilled professionals to Yeovil will diminish. This will in turn impact demand for new housing, weaken local development prospects, and undermine the long-term sustainability of our communities. The ability to plan for growth — economically and socially — depends on the continued presence of skilled employment.

For many residents, Leonardo is not simply an employer. For decades, the construction of helicopters in Yeovil has been a defining feature of the town and a major reason people have chosen to live, work, and raise families here. Almost every household has a direct connection to the site — past or present — or includes someone who aspires to work there in the future. Leonardo is widely regarded as the most sought-after employer in the area, offering stable, skilled, and meaningful work.

The loss of this capability would therefore represent far more than the closure of a manufacturing facility. It would risk the loss of Yeovil's industrial identity and the dismantling of a community built around skills, innovation, and contribution to the nation's defence.

Beyond the local impact, the national implications remain stark. Leonardo Yeovil is the UK's last remaining end-to-end military helicopter manufacturer. At a time of increasing geopolitical uncertainty, the UK cannot afford to become more reliant on overseas supply chains or external powers for critical defence capabilities. The ability to design, build, maintain, and upgrade helicopters onshore is essential to national security, operational resilience, and strategic independence.

We therefore ask plainly and directly: will the Government commit to supporting a British-built medium lift helicopter capability and award the NMH contract to Leonardo in Yeovil now?

We join Adam Dance MP in calling for the immediate decoupling of the NMH contract from the Defence Investment Plan and for a clear and decisive award to be made. Our residents deserve certainty, our workforce deserves commitment, and the country requires secure, sovereign capability.

The strength of feeling across our parishes cannot be overstated. Yeovil Without Parish Council, together with the parish councils listed below, urges you to act now to protect skilled employment, apprenticeships, sovereign capability, and the identity of a town that has supported Britain's defence needs for generations.

We look forward to your urgent response and stand ready to engage constructively to secure the future of our communities and the UK's defence capability.

Yours sincerely,

**For and on behalf of
Yeovil Without Parish Council**



Barbara Appleby - Clerk to Yeovil Without Parish Council

With the formal support of:

**Barwick & Stoford Parish Council
Brympton Parish Council
East Chinnock Parish Council
East Coker Parish Council
Hardington Mandeville Parish Council
Ilchester Parish Council
Odcombe Parish Council
Stoke-Sub-Hamdon Parish Council
Tintinhull Parish Council
West Camel Parish Council
West Coker Parish Council
Yeovil Town Council**

cc: Adam Dance MP, Member of Parliament for Yeovil