



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB

19 August 2020

Closure of MAN Energy Solutions, Colchester

I am writing to you regarding MAN Energy Solutions, formerly the Paxman factory. This is a diesel engine manufacturing business that has operated in Colchester for over 150 years, supplying diesel engines for the railways and shipping, including Royal Navy Type 23 frigates. MAN Energy Solutions is a subsidiary of the Volkswagen Group.

Last month, the factory was issued with a closure notice from the parent company in Germany, putting 80 jobs at risk, after many on the shop floor continued to work through lockdown as key workers for the company.

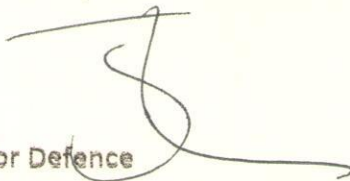
I understand that the factory in Colchester has nine years remaining on a contract with the Royal Navy to support Type 23 frigates, and that it is not making a financial loss. The closure of the business increases the risk of British-made VP185 engines being replaced by the 175D that are built abroad.

Factories such as this have been the backbone of the British economy for generations, supporting jobs, skills and our defence sector. At a time when the threat to jobs is so widespread, the decision to close this site should raise serious alarm for the Government and your commitment to protect long-standing British skills and jobs.

I would ask your department, as a matter of urgency, to:

- 1) Investigate the details of this case, consult with the management, relevant unions and workers, and report on the potential impact on existing MoD contracts with the factory
- 2) Reassure British manufacturers by demonstrating that you will use the Government's economic power through defence procurement contracts to protect UK jobs and skills.

Generations of families in Colchester have worked at the Paxman factory and its loss will be immense both for the local economy and the history of the town. I look forward to your response.



John Healey MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Defence