

Your Reference



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Dear Mark

**Chalgrove Airfield**

I write further to the Killinchy Aerospace Holdings Limited's shareholders meeting held on Friday 1 December. Following the Homes and Communities Agency's presentation on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November the shareholders were given the opportunity to vote on whether discussions should continue with the Homes and Communities Agency with a view to part of the airfield being developed for a new housing settlement.

I confirm that the majority of the shareholders of Killinchy Aerospace voted not to continue discussions and to reject the offer made by the Homes and Communities Agency. The reasons for the rejection relate solely to the operational requirements of Martin-Baker Aircraft Company Ltd (Martin-Baker), both present and potential future operations as set out below.

As you are aware Killinchy's operating subsidiary, Martin-Baker, undertake the development and testing of aircraft ejection equipment and the operation of a pyrotechnic facility at Chalgrove Airfield and also use the runway at Chalgrove for the landing and take-off of its own aircraft as well as the aircraft of customers. Pyrotechnics plays a large part in the design and production of Martin-Baker's ejection seats and, most importantly their ejections. Martin-Baker manufactures and tests all of its own pyrotechnics at Chalgrove Airfield.

As explained in the representation to the emerging Local Plan, the business operations undertaken by Martin-Baker have not just national importance but also global importance in terms of the centre being approved by defence departments around the world and being only one of two such testing facilities in the world.

The shareholders of Killinchy are not convinced about having such a large population near an important pyrotechnic facility nor that by having such a larger number of people near the facility that this would not lead to disruption, particularly if the number of firings were increased. The prospect of the number of firings increasing would occur if the volume of work undertaken at Chalgrove increases which cannot be ruled out.

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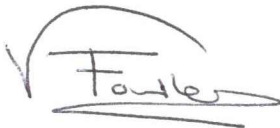
The shareholders are also concerned about restricting Martin-Baker's development of future products. If Martin-Baker's operations extended to other products then the company could require the whole airfield to undertake the related activity. The shareholders of a globally important company are naturally keen to ensure that they are not restricting the ability for Martin-Baker to develop new products.

The number of airfields across the country has been declining. Chalgrove Airfield currently has three runways albeit at this point in time only one is used. Chalgrove Airfield should, however, be seen as a strategically important facility. We live in uncertain times and were it to be necessary for Martin-Baker to ship its products by air to its customers it would need to have the longer runway.

I am keen to stress, as I know there has been a suggestion within the council, that this is not just Killinchy holding out for a better financial offer. The rejection has nothing to do with the financial offer but from a genuine and real concern to protect both Martin-Baker's existing operations and importantly those which could come forward in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the Homes and Communities Agency on the work which went into the presentations and discussions.

Yours sincerely



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cc Adrian Duffield, Head of Planning  
John Cotton, Cabinet Member for Planning