



**UK Atomic
Energy
Authority**

CEO
Culham Science Centre
Abingdon OX14 3DB

Tel: +44 (0) 1235 466375

www.uk-atomic-energy.org.uk

Cllr John Cotton
Leader, South Oxfordshire District Council
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Milton
OX14 4SB

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Dear John

South Oxfordshire Local Plan

The UKAEA notes that your Council's Cabinet will be considering a report from the Council's Head of Planning on the South Oxfordshire Local Plan at its meeting on Tuesday 20th March. We note that the report outlines potential problems with the delivery [and thus the soundness] of the proposed strategic allocation at Chalgrove Airfield. This has led officers to outline three possible options: Option 1: proceed with the Plan as drafted; Option 2: remove Chalgrove and replace it with another strategic site; or Option 3: retain Chalgrove but add an additional strategic site. We note that the recommendation from officers is to pursue Option 3.

You will be aware that in the last Autumn Statement, the Government announced £86m of funding for new investment at Culham. This was in addition to the existing commitments to extend RACE and to build a new Oxfordshire Advanced Skills centre on the site. The UKAEA acknowledges that there are risks associated with all three options. Of particular concern to the UKAEA is anything that will delay the adoption of the Plan, which in turn could jeopardise the County Council's current Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid and the Local Growth Board bid for infrastructure funding, both of which would provide new highway infrastructure that is vital to the delivery of the new investment referred to above. That growth is also predicated in part on the proposal in the Local Plan to remove Culham Science Centre from the Green Belt.

Against this background, we would ask you and your fellow councillors to seek to ensure that any delay in progressing the Local Plan is kept to an absolute minimum.

Yours sincerely

Prof Ian Chapman, FInstP
CEO

Cc Catherine Pridham, Steve Moss, Caroline Livingstone, UKAEA

