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& Technology

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Dear Cllr Rout,

Thank you for your correspondence of 29 January regarding the Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025.

I want to first emphasise the Government's appreciation of the essential role local authorities play in consenting, shaping and hosting nuclear development. Your experience and the trust you hold with communities remain central to the success of the UK's nuclear programme.

The Government has endorsed the principle of all the Taskforce's recommendations, and we are now developing a full implementation plan that will take account of our environmental, legal and planning obligations. Where a recommendation cannot be taken forward directly, we will consider alternatives that deliver its spirit while remaining consistent with those obligations.

You raised concerns about paragraph 490. This was of course an independent Review, but our understanding the paragraph is that its' intent is not to diminish the contribution of local authorities or to imply that engagement leads to delay. We recognise the resource pressures local authorities face in supporting major infrastructure, and the reforms aim to simplify processes and reduce unnecessary duplication, not to create unfunded burdens or reduce local involvement.

Planning Performance Agreements remain an important mechanism to ensure that local authorities are properly resourced, and nothing in the Review prevents their continued use. We will continue work across Government to ensure that engagement in the DCO process is supported in a fair and transparent way, reflecting the value of local knowledge and the need for early, meaningful input.

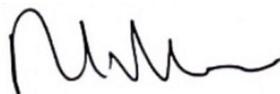
Public trust, transparency, and local insight are essential to the delivery of nuclear projects. The reforms seek to make the system more efficient and predictable while maintaining rigorous standards and supporting local leadership of long-term community benefits.

We will take forward measures that are compatible with strong safety, environmental protection and the Government's commitment to collaboration with local authorities. Local Authorities will continue to play an important role under the Planning Act 2008.

We expect to publish our full implementation plan within three months of the Final Report's publication. I welcome your offer to continue working with Government and industry as we refine the detail of these reforms. Your constructive engagement is, and will continue to be, vital in ensuring the UK's nuclear programme is delivered efficiently, safely, and with the confidence of local communities.

Finally, thank you for including the case study relating to Sizewell C and Suffolk's Local Authorities. I visited Sizewell in December and noted the importance of the project to the Government's nuclear policy objectives. Sizewell C will be a major engine of growth and prosperity for Suffolk, the wider east of England region, and the UK's national nuclear industry, though it is vital that the project works constructively with you, the East Suffolk District Council, and local communities more generally as construction continues.

Yours sincerely,



**LORD VALLANCE**

Minister of State for Science, Research, Innovation and Nuclear