Government Chief Scientific Adviser visits UK Atomic Energy Authority and First Light Fusion

Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, today visited UKAEA and FLF joined by Bill Lee, Chief Scientific Adviser (Nuclear) at the Ministry of Defence.

UKAEA, based in the Culham Science Centre, is the UK government research organisation responsible for the development of fusion energy. It is a non-departmental public body of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

During his visit, Sir Patrick learned about transformative potential of fusion energy in the global fight against climate change. Specifically, he received a briefing on STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production), the first prototype fusion energy powerplant, He also received presentations from several innovative companies based at the Culham Science Centre including General Fusions, Reaction Engines and Oxbotica.

Following his visit to UKAEA, Sir Patrick met the team at FLF, which focuses on decarbonising the global energy system through an inertial confinement approach. Sir Patrick was given facility tours of the Big Friendly Gun (BFG), the highest energy projectile launcher in the UK, and Machine 3 (M3), the largest pulsed power facility in Europe.

Speaking about the visit, Sir Patrick said:

> It was fantastic to visit UKAEA and FLF today and see first-hand the exciting potential of fusion technology and the rapid progress being made. Their collective, ongoing contribution to nuclear fusion research and demonstration is helping to solve one of the world's greatest challenges in decarbonising our global energy systems, as well as advancing a range of critical science and technology areas.

Professor Ian Chapman, UKAEA Chief Executive, added:

> We believe fusion energy can be an environmentally responsible part of the world's future energy mix and it was fantastic to discuss the ground-breaking research and innovation being done here in the UK with Sir Patrick.
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> UKAEA continues to create jobs and drive economic growth in fusion-focused and adjacent fields, while helping to keep the country at the forefront of the international scientific community.