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CC. SM ✓
5/6/74

Dr G H Stafford
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Your reference

In reply please quote

Date

4 June 1974

Dear

Godfrey

HIGH POWERED LASER PROJECT

I know that you have had discussions with both Sam Edwards and Walter Marshall about this and I imagine you saw the paper which went to the Science Board last week.

In fact the Board was very enthusiastic about the project and gave us every encouragement to get ahead and firm it up - "in principle" agreement subject to working out the details. I attach the draft minute,* from which you will see that we now have Board authority to ask you to look further into what would be needed. I hope very much that you will be able to do this, and I gathered from talking to Geoff Manning today that you had already given some thought to what needs to be done. From our side, John Fendley is the man involved and I know he will be happy to do whatever he can and in particular to fill your people in on the background so far as we know it and to make sure you have all the necessary background papers, including what we have from AERE.

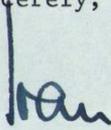
Subject to your views, I think that what is necessary now is to make an assessment of what would be needed to set up a facility of the kind proposed, the time-scale and costs involved, the manpower resources required, the likely longer term developments, probable running costs, implications of cooperation with Harwell etc. This is quite a formidable task, although a good starting point will certainly be the work already put in at Harwell by Colin Whitehead and Dave Ashby.

On time-scales generally, I understand that Harwell are hoping to get a proposal to the Authority in July, and Sam is anxious that we should also put something to Council before the recess. This poses problems which perhaps we ought to talk about - clearly we cannot put a fully costed proposal in which we have any great degree of confidence and we shall probably have to rely again on asking for agreement in principle within some sort of financial framework which will have to be consistent with the AEA proposal if it is to come together with it at the level of the Ministerial Committee. There is another Science Board meeting on June 26; if you need authority for expenditure on a feasibility study or whatever, that would be the time to get it - papers being due out on June 19. Equally if something is going to Council on July 17 we ought at least to report progress to the Board on June 26

* to follow

and in any case will have to be fairly far advanced with the form of the Council paper by that date. This all sounds rather horrifying as I am sure you will tell me, but perhaps we could have a word when you are back in the Laboratory.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. O. Paton', written in a cursive style.

MRS J O PATON