The work of the Committee in 2007-08 : second report of session 2008-09 : report, together with formal minutes, and written evidence / House of Commons, Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee.

House of Commons

Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee

The work of the Committee in 2007–08

Second Report of Session 2008–09

HC 49

House of Commons

Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee

The work of the Committee in 2007–08

Second Report of Session 2008–09

Report, together with formal minutes, and written evidence

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 15 December 2008

HC 49
Published on 16 January 2009
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£13.50

The Innovation, Universities, Science & Skills Committee

The Innovation, Universities, Science & Skills Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.

Current membership

Mr Phil Willis *(Liberal Democrat, Harrogate and Knaresborough)(Chairman)*
Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods *(Labour, City of Durham)*
Mr Tim Boswell *(Conservative, Daventry)*
Mr Ian Cawsey *(Labour, Brigg & Goole)*
Mrs Nadine Dorries *(Conservative, Mid Bedfordshire)*
Dr Ian Gibson *(Labour, Norwich North)*
Dr Evan Harris *(Liberal Democrat, Oxford West & Abingdon)*
Dr Brian Iddon *(Labour, Bolton South East)*
Mr Gordon Marsden *(Labour, Blackpool South)*
Dr Bob Spink *(UK Independence Party, Castle Point)*
Ian Stewart *(Labour, Eccles)*
Graham Stringer *(Labour, Manchester, Blackley)*
Dr Desmond Turner *(Labour, Brighton Kemptown)*
Mr Rob Wilson *(Conservative, Reading East)*

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental Select Committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No.152. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at www.parliament.uk/ius
A list of Reports from the Committee in this Parliament is included at the back of this volume.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are: Sarah Davies (Clerk); Glenn McKee (Second Clerk); Dr Christopher Tyler (Committee Specialist); Dr Joanna Dally (Committee Specialist); Ana Ferreira (Senior Committee Assistant); Camilla Brace (Committee Assistant); Anna Browning (Committee Assistant); and Jonathan Olivier Wright (Committee Support Assistant).

Previous staff of the Committee during the Session

Dr Lynn Gardner (Clerk); and Dr Edward Waller (Second Clerk)

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Innovation, Universities, Science & Skills Committee, Committee Office, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general inquiries is: 020 7219 2793; the Committee's e-mail address is: iuscomm@parliament.uk.

Contents

Report

1 Introduction

Formation of the Committee

1. The Select Committee on Innovation, Universities and Skills was established as a result of the machinery of Government changes announced on 28 June 2007 which created a new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). DIUS inherited from the former Department for Education and Skills responsibility for higher and further education and skills training as well as science and innovation policy from the former Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The new Committee was nominated on 8 November 2007 and this, our first Sessional Report, provides an account of our early work and the way in which we have addressed our core tasks as set by the House's Liaison Committee.[1]

2. Until the start of Session 2007–08 scrutiny of science policy was carried out by the Science and Technology Committee (a non-departmental committee) which had a remit to monitor the Office of Science and Innovation (OSI) within the DTI and science across Government. That Committee was abolished at the end of the 2006–07 Session and responsibility for scrutiny of science passed to the new Innovation, Universities and Skills Committee, a move which led to concerns being expressed by the Science and Technology Committee[2] and the wider scientific community (including in a letter to the Guardian in July 2007):

> The recent changes to the organisation of government departments involved moving the work of the Office of Science & Innovation into the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills, (DIUS) which will be scrutinised by a departmental select committee covering all those areas and matters to do with expenditure. However, as a result, there is the prospect of the abolition of the science and technology select committee along with its important functions.
>
> This committee does a great deal of vital work scrutinising scientific matters and the use of evidence across government departments and agencies. Recent important inquiries include hybrid/chimera embryos, nanotechnology, the future of health research, the impact of EU legislation on MRI, open access publishing, carbon capture and space (published this week).
>
> Just as peer review is important in science, so is adequate oversight of the use of science in policy-making. The government has acquired a good reputation in the science world for supporting science. It could enhance its reputation further by ensuring the continuation of this, either through a stand-alone science and technology committee or through an adequately resourced and autonomous subcommittee of the DIUS select committee.[3]

1 See Box 1 and Table 1

2 Science and Technology Committee, Thirteenth Report of Session 2006–07, *The Last Report*, HC 1108

3 *Science needs its Select Committee*, letter to the Guardian 20 July 2007: Prof Sir Martin Rees, President, Royal Society, Lord Browne of Madingley, President, Royal Academy of Engineering, Dr Mark Walport, Director, The Wellcome Trust, Prof Colin Blakemore, Chief Executive, Medical Research Council, and 34 eminent members of the scientific and engineering community.

In one of our new inquiries, *Putting science and engineering at the heart of government policy*, the terms of reference include an examination of how science policy is scrutinised, enabling us to revisit this issue.

3. In parallel, the Education and Skills Committee was disbanded and while we assumed responsibility for scrutiny of Universities and Skills, a Committee was established to examine the work of the new Department for Children, Schools and Families.

4. Nine members of the former Science and Technology Committee and three members of the former Education and Skills Committee were appointed to the new Committee, which has 14 members rather than the more usual 11. Phil Willis (Chairman of the former Science and Technology Committee) was elected Chairman at our first meeting on 14 November 2007.

A change of name

5. Scrutiny of science policy is just one part of the remit of the new Committee and we have made a conscious effort to cover as many aspects of innovation as well as skills, higher and further education as possible. However we were keen to retain—and be seen to retain—our role in scrutinising science, and following our representations to the Government the House of Commons agreed on 11 March 2008 to change the name of the Innovation, Universities and Skills Committee to include the word science in the title.[4] This underlines the inclusion of science in our remit and our role in scrutinising science across Government. However, the title of the Department still does not include the word 'science'. Changes to both names had been recommended by the Science and Technology Committee in its *Last Report*, and we believe that the Department would be better named the Department for Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills.[5]

6. The Leader of the House, Harriet Harman MP, commented that "If the Committee chooses to have a Sub-Committee covering science and technology issues, it will be able to operate that Sub-Committee, in effect, as a successor to the current Science and Technology Committee."[6] We chose, on balance, not to appoint a standing Sub-Committee on Science and Technology because we thought that this could be seen as downgrading our science scrutiny role. Instead we have made frequent use of sub-committees to conduct inquiries on a variety of subjects.

7. During the 2007–08 Session we held 50 Committee meetings and 12 Sub-Committee meetings and took oral evidence on 46 occasions. We published seven Reports and over and above the evidence for these inquiries also held 11 separate oral evidence hearings. Table 2 lists all our inquiries and evidence sessions and Table 3 shows the visits we have made both in the UK and abroad. For further details see the Committee's entry in the Sessional Return, which is annexed to this Report.

---

4 *Votes and Proceedings*, 11 March 2008

5 Science and Technology Committee, Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-07, *The Last Report*, HC 1108, paras 5–7

6 HC Deb, 25 July 2007, col 942

Box 1: Objectives and core tasks issued by the House of Commons Liaison Committee

OBJECTIVE A: To examine and comment on the policy of the department

Task 1: To examine policy proposals from the UK Government and the European Commission in Green Papers, White Papers, draft Guidance etc, and to inquire further where the Committee considers it appropriate

Task 2: To identify and examine areas of emerging policy, or where existing policy is deficient, and make proposals

Task 3: To conduct scrutiny of any published draft bill within the Committee's responsibilities

Task 4: To examine specific output from the department expressed in documents or other decisions

OBJECTIVE B : To examine the expenditure of the department

Task 5: To examine the expenditure plans and out-turn of the department, its agencies and principal NDPBs

OBJECTIVE C : To examine the administration of the department

Task 6: To examine the department's Public Service Agreements, the associated targets and the statistical measurements employed, and report if appropriate

Task 7: To monitor the work of the department's Executive Agencies, NDPBs, regulators and other associated public bodies

Task 8: To scrutinise major appointments made by the department

Task 9: To examine the implementation of legislation and major policy initiatives

OBJECTIVE D: To assist the House in debate and decision

Task 10: To produce Reports which are suitable for debate in the House, including Westminster Hall, or debating committees

Table 1: Relationship of inquiries and evidence sessions to objectives and core tasks

Inquiries/Evidence Sessions	Objective A				Objective B	Objective C				Objective D
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The Sainsbury Review	X	X		X	X	X			X	
Higher education issues		X			X	X	X		X	
GCSA—Professor Sir David King		X			X	X			X	
GCSA—Professor John Beddington		X			X	X		X	X	
Formation of DIUS					X			X		
Renewable Electricity-Generation Technologies	X	X			X					
Funding for Equivalent or Lower Qualifications (ELQs)		X		X	X	X	X		X	
Biosecurity in UK Research Laboratories		X		X	X		X		X	
UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation		X			X		X			
Science Budget Allocations		X		X	X		X			X
The work and operation of the Copyright Tribunal	X	X		X	X		X			
Engineering		X			X	X	X		X	
The Leitch Review of Skills	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	
Re-skilling for recovery - After Leitch: Implementing Skills And Training Policies	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	
The use of Government Statistics in Evidence-Based Policy-Making		X								
The Office For Fair Access (OFFA)		X			X	X	X			
Investigating the Oceans		X		X	X		X		X	X
The Quality Assurance Agency's Recent Report on Standards in Universities		X					X			
Scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
DIUS's Departmental Report 2008				X	X	X	X		X	
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council		X		X	X	X	X	X		

Table 2: Status of inquiries at December 2008

Inquiries/Evidence Sessions	Number of Evidence Sessions	Status	Government Response
UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation	1	Reported January 2008 (HC 185)	March 2008 (HC 459)
The work and operation of the Copyright Tribunal	1	Reported March 2008 (HC 245)	June 2008 (HC 637)
Funding for Equivalent or Lower Qualifications (ELQs)	1	Reported March 2008 (HC 187)	June 2008 (HC 638)
Science Budget Allocations	3	Reported April 2008 (HC 215)	June 2008 (HC 639)
Renewable Electricity-Generation Technologies	4	Reported June 2008 (HC 216)	October 2008 (HC 1063)
Biosecurity in UK Research Laboratories	3	Reported June 2008 (HC 360)	November 2008 (HC 1111) Awaiting outstanding memorandum
Engineering	12	In progress	N/A
Scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill	2	Reported November 2008 (HC 1062-I)	Expected early 2009
DIUS's Departmental Report 2008	3	To report January 2009 (HC 51)	Expected early 2009
Re-skilling for recovery - After Leitch: Implementing Skills And Training Policies	5	To report January 2009 (HC 48)	Expected early 2009
Investigating the Oceans	1	Reported follow-up session in May 2008 with Government Response (HC 506)	
The Sainsbury Review	1	Minutes of Evidence Printed 31 October 2008 (HC 113-i, HC 598-i, HC 443-i, and HC 471-i)	N/A
The Office For Fair Access (OFFA)	1		
The use of Government Statistics in Evidence-Based Policy-Making	1		
The Leitch Review of Skills	1		
GCSA—Professor Sir David King	1	Minutes of Evidence Printed 27 November 2008 (HC 115-i, HC 116-i, HC 114-i, and HC 905-i)	
GCSA—Professor John Beddington	1		
Higher education issues	1		
The Quality Assurance Agency's Recent Report on Standards in Universities	1		
Formation of DIUS	1	Minutes of Evidence (HC 186-i) To be printed with Report on DIUS's Departmental Report 2008	
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	1	Minutes of Evidence to be published shortly	N/A

Table 3: Committee/Sub-Committee Visits

Location of Visit	Date of visit	Participants	Purpose of visit
Rutherford Appleton Laboratory	31 January 2008	3 Members, 1 Staff	Science Budget Allocations
Edinburgh	4 February 2008	2 Members, 1 Staff	Science Budget Allocations
Daresbury Laboratory	18 February 2008	5 Members, 2 Staff	Science Budget Allocations
British Library	27 February 2008	1 Member, 2 Staff	Engagement with the broader DIUS community
Pirbright	28 February 2008	4 Members, 2 Staff	Biosecurity in UK research laboratories
Berlin, Germany	3-5 March 2008	5 Members, 2 Staff	Biosecurity in UK research laboratories / Renewable-electricity generation technologies
Porton Down	20 March 2008	3 Members, 2 Staff	Biosecurity in UK research laboratories
CERN, Geneva	27 March 2008	5 Members, 2 Staff	Engagement with the broader DIUS community
Bucharest, Romania	23-24 April 2008	1 Member (representing the Committee)	European Forum on Habitat
Leeds	14 May 2008	4 Members, 4 Staff	After Leitch: implementing skills and training policies
AQA, Guildford	3 June 2008	3 Members, 2 Staff	Engagement with the broader DIUS community
Sizewell B, Leiston, Suffolk	15 July 2008	4 Members, 3 Staff	Engineering
September Visits: Sellafield, Imperial College London, Royal Society, UKCES, MRC, HEPI & DIUS, Culham Institute, RCUK & Technology Strategy Board, Printable Electronic Technology Centre	September 2008	Chairman and others	Engagement with the broader DIUS community
China and Japan	19-25 October 2008	6 Members, 2 Staff	Engineering

2 Committee inquiries and evidence sessions

8. We began the 2007–08 Session by holding an informal awayday at which we discussed our future programme and working practices. The day was productive and helpful in forming a sense of identity for the new Committee.

Core Scrutiny of DIUS

One-off sessions

9. Our first meetings included a series of one-off oral evidence sessions on the main DIUS policy areas. Key to this was a session with the new Secretary of State, the Rt Hon John Denham MP and the Permanent Secretary of the new Department, Ian Watmore. We also took evidence from Lord Leitch (on skills) and from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Minister responsible for Higher Education, Bill Rammell MP. In the area of science sessions were held with Professor Sir David King, the outgoing Government Chief Scientific Adviser, and his replacement, Professor John Beddington. While this was not an official pre-appointment hearing it allowed us the opportunity to explore some of Professor Beddington's intentions for his new role. Lastly, Lord Sainsbury of Turville gave evidence on the subject of his report *Race to the Top* on the UK's science and innovation policy.

DIUS's Departmental Report 2008

10. This inquiry aimed to fulfil Objectives A (task 4), B (task 5) and C (tasks 6, 7 and 9) of the Committee's core tasks by examining the administration, expenditure and policy of DIUS based on its Annual Report. It also allowed us to follow up the one-off evidence sessions held at the beginning of the year and to take a view on how well the new Department was performing. The first evidence session focused on the Department's administration, the second—with the Secretary of State—on Departmental policy, and the third—with Professor John Beddington—focused on the Government Office for Science (GO-Science) and its role overseeing science across Government. The Report will be published in early 2009.[7]

11. The creation of DIUS in the 2007 machinery of government changes saw subtle alterations to the way in which science policy-making is organised. The Science and Technology Committee had previously recommended the separation of the roles of Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GCSA) and head of the OSI and the relocation of the GCSA to the Cabinet Office.[8] The first part of this recommendation was implemented when the office of the GCSA (renamed the Government Office for Science or GO-Science) moved from DTI to DIUS. GO-Science retained its independence as a discrete body within DIUS whilst most of the OSI was subsumed into the main DIUS organisation under the

7 As the Third Report of Session 2008–09, HC 51-I

8 Science and Technology Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2005–06, *Scientific Advice, Risk and Evidence Based Policy Making*, HC 900-I

leadership of a Director General of Science and Research. However, the recommendation that the office of the GCSA be moved to the Cabinet Office was not accepted.[9]

Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies

12. One of the Committee's key scrutiny roles as outlined in Task 7 (Objective C) of the core tasks is "to monitor the work of the department's Executive Agencies, NDPBs, regulators and associated public bodies" We keep a watching brief on these organisations and directly and indirectly, through other inquiries which have touched on their work, have examined their activities as listed below.

Medical Research Council and the UKCMRI

13. The Committee's First Report of Session 2007–08 addressed the creation of the UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation (UKCMRI), to be located in central London next to the British Library and St Pancras station.[10] As one of the Research Councils, the Medical Research Council is an NDPB of DIUS and the founding of the UKCMRI will constitute a major relocation of its research capacity and a significant capital spend.[11] Our Report highlighted concerns about the timetable, the financial arrangements (in particular the treatment of the MRC's Commercial fund by the Treasury) for the project and the lack of clarity about which science would survive in the move from the MRC's National Institute for Medical Research to the new site. The Committee is currently receiving six-monthly updates from the MRC on progress with the project, the first of which was received in July 2008 and is published with this Report.[12]

Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

14. Members of the Committee visited the part STFC funded CERN project in March 2008 to meet British scientists and to see the Large Hadron Collider before its completion and inauguration in September. We also conducted an inquiry into Science Budget Allocations, discussed in greater detail later in this Report.

The Copyright Tribunal and the Intellectual Property Office

15. In March we published our Second Report of Session 2007–08 examining the work of the Copyright Tribunal,[13] which adjudicates in commercial disputes between copyright owners and users. We examined the recent review of the Tribunal commissioned by the Intellectual Property Office (which has administrative responsibility for it) and concluded that the Government needed to take action to implement the recommendations, in the face of complaints about delays, costs and the fact that the Tribunal has failed to meet the challenges of the digital age.

---

9 See Press Notice on Machinery of Government Changes, 28 June 2007, www.number10.gov.uk

10 HC 185

11 Other partners involved with the UKCMRI are Cancer Research UK, the Wellcome Trust and UCL (University College London).

12 Ev 11

13 HC 245

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

16. We took evidence from John Armitt, Chairman and Professor David Delpy, Chief Executive, in November 2008 to explore a number of issues: firstly, concerns about levels of research funding and, secondly, the role of the EPSRC in supporting innovation through the Technology Strategy Board. This session also constituted an introductory hearing with John Armitt.[14] We are currently following up the evidence taken from EPSRC and are awaiting financial data on research grant allocations.

Higher Education Funding Council for England

17. The role of HEFCE has been examined by us on three occasions. On 28 November 2007 we took evidence from Professor David Eastwood, Chief Executive, HEFCE and Bill Rammell MP, then Minister for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, DIUS as one of our sessions introducing the work of the new Department.[15] HEFCE returned to give evidence as part of our inquiries into Equivalent or Lower Level Qualifications (ELQs), and on implementation of the Leitch Review.

Office for Fair Access

18. On 2 June 2008 we took evidence from Professor Sir Martin Harris, Director of Fair Access to Higher Education, Office for Fair Access (OFFA).[16] This evidence session centred on the work of OFFA in ensuring that the new fee arrangements do not deter students in under-represented groups from attending university.

Science and Innovation Network

19. Our Committee has taken a keen interest in the future of the Science and Innovation Network. The Network, which involves dedicated staff in 24 countries, was established by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in 2000. Its objectives include promoting scientific collaboration and driving innovation and policy-making through facilitating new international partnerships.

20. Following a strategic review its future looked uncertain. We were told by the FCO that "its own requirement could be met with a smaller Science and Innovation Network" and that it was exploring other sources of funding.[17] In March we received a joint memorandum from the FCO and DIUS confirming that the Network would in future be funded jointly by the two departments, with DIUS taking overall leadership and management responsibility.[18] We will closely monitor how this arrangement works in practice.

---

14 Oral evidence taken before the Committee on 12 November 2008, HC (2007-08) 1170-i

15 Oral evidence taken before the Committee on 28 November 2007, HC (2007-08) 114-i

16 Oral evidence taken before the Committee on 2 June 2008, HC (2007-08) 598-i

17 Ev 2

18 As above

21. We use this opportunity to thank staff from the Network who assisted in the organisation of our visits to Germany, China and Japan, and to the other members of the Network who have assisted us throughout the year with requests for information.

Inquiries into long-term issues

Renewable electricity-generation technologies

22. The first of our longer-term inquiries was a study of renewable electricity-generation technologies which we completed in June 2008 in our Fifth Report of the Session.[19] The inquiry focused on the adequacy and feasibility of the Government's targets for renewable electricity generation, as well as the funding landscape and the relationship with the planning system. The Committee visited Germany in connection with the inquiry.

The Leitch Review of Skills

23. The placing of 'Skills' in the title of DIUS is a welcome emphasis on this key area of the Government's agenda. As well as having an early evidence session with Lord Leitch we appointed a sub-committee and conducted a substantial inquiry on how the Government is implementing the recommendations of his report *Prosperity for all in the global economy—world class skills*. Our report will be published in January 2009.[20]

Engineering

24. We were prompted to inquire into the future of engineering following concerns expressed to us that the UK would soon have a shortage of engineers in several important areas, and a desire to conduct an inquiry which embraced every aspect of the DIUS remit. This inquiry has been a major piece of work which we conducted in an iterative and innovative way, holding initial evidence sessions with witnesses prior to choosing case studies of particular sectors: nuclear engineering, geo-engineering, plastic electronics and engineering in government. We conducted a series of visits during the inquiry, including China and Japan. The report will be published in spring 2009.

Reactive Inquiries

25. A number of the Committee's inquiries responded to issues of immediate public concern.

Equivalent or Lower Level Qualifications

26. This inquiry examined the Government's decision to withdraw funding to Higher Education Institutions to subsidise the fees of students studying 'ELQs'. The Report, the Committee's Third Report of 2007–08,[21] concluded that not only was there hostility to the changes among stakeholders, but also that consultation was poor, the policy unjustified and the transition arrangements inadequate.

---

19 HC 216-I

20 As the First Report of the Committee, Session 2008-09, HC 48

21 HC 187-I

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

27. We held a single evidence session in July 2008 with the management of the QAA, following its report on Standards in Universities. This was particularly topical given an interview the Chief Executive gave to the BBC in which he described the degree classification system as "arbitrary and unreliable" and "rotten".[22] We will take some of these issues forward in our recently announced inquiry *Students and Universities.*

Science Budget Allocations

28. The Fourth Report of Session 2007–08, on Science Budget Allocations,[23] was originally planned as a short focused study of the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, but as soon as the inquiry was announced it was apparent that members of the particle physics and astronomy community had grave concerns about future funding arrangements. Despite the fact that in CSR 2007 the science budget rose by 17.5% between 2007–08 and 2010–11, real problems arose following the creation of the Science and Technology Facilities Council, both in the balance between central commitments and responsive mode grants, and the decisions made by the STFC in its Delivery Plan on the future of the Daresbury Laboratory. We were highly critical in our report of DIUS and the STFC and took the view that they had both handled the situation in a cavalier and unprofessional way and that there are fundamental issues relating to the allocation of budgets, the setting of priorities and the Haldane principle which need further consideration. This is an issue in which we continue to take a close interest and we will take further evidence from the STFC early in the new year.

29. The inquiry also covered the work of two other Research Councils: the Arts and Humanities Research Council (with which we hope to do further work in 2009 on innovation and knowledge transfer) and the Medical Research Council.

"The Government's announcement of the 2007–08 to 2010–2011 Science Budget should have been a triumph yet somehow this £11.24 billion contribution to UK research became a PR disaster. The focus of community wrath was aimed at the door of the newly formed Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) who spotted an £80 million shortfall in key budgets. Whether the advent of full economic costs, the additional expenditure on Diamond Light Source and other large facilities, or the move to set up STFC were the cause was not clear. The decision of the IUSS Committee to hold an inquiry into *'Science Budget Allocations'* encouraged the particle physics and astronomy community to air their concerns and enabled Members of the Committee to visit Daresbury Laboratory, the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and the Astronomy Technology Centre in Edinburgh to understand first hand the brilliant science that STFC was funding. A clear case of the IUSS Select Committee adding value through its scrutiny process."

Phil Willis MP, Chairman

22 Oral evidence taken before the Committee on 17 July 2008, HC (2007-08) 905-I, Q 45

23 HC 215-I

Biosecurity

30. The Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2007–08[24] examined the issue of biosecurity in UK research laboratories. The 2007 outbreak of foot and mouth disease which was traced back to laboratories at Pirbright in Surrey demonstrated the importance of this matter. We recommended that the Government set up an inter-agency body with the role of improving strategic planning and co-ordination of high containment laboratories and were disturbed that Ministers had not met to discuss biosecurity, concluding that a Ministerial group should be set up to rectify this. Both of these recommendations were accepted by the Government in its response to our Report.[25]

31. Further recommendations related to the Institute for Animal Health at Pirbright, which is currently being redeveloped. Costs for the project have risen beyond initial expectations and our Report recommended that a final financial settlement should be sought as a matter of priority. We also recommended that the Government clarify its long term animal health strategy, including its vision for the future of the Pirbright laboratories. On these matters we are yet to receive a response from the Government.

"I find the range of the Committee's activities this year has been very wide and fascinating, but the highlight as far as I am concerned was the visit to Porton Down. It included the Defence and Health Protection elements of the site (one in a modern and one in a 50 years' old facility).

"As ever, the chance to meet competent enthusiastic and generally young experimental scientists was stimulating. Walking into the Level 4 containment facilities for dangerous pathogens was eerie but gave us a good idea of what was involved and the seriousness which this subject deserves."

Mr Tim Boswell MP

Pre-legislative Scrutiny

32. Committees are expected to scrutinise draft Bills which fall within their remit. We therefore conducted a short inquiry on the *Draft Apprenticeships Bill* and published a report in early December 2008, which included a series of recommendations to improve the draft Bill and, in particular, emphasise the importance of the quality of apprenticeships.[26]

Other work

33. During the year we visited the British Library and the AQA, the UK awarding body for A-levels, GCSEs and other exams, to meet staff and have the opportunity to discuss their

24 HC 360-I

25 Ninth Special Report from the Committee, Session 2007–08, *Biosecurity in UK research laboratories: Government Response to the Sixth Report from the Committee*, HC 1111

26 Seventh Report of Session 2007–08, HC 1062-I

work. We were also pleased to meet delegations visiting Westminster, including parliamentarians from the Slovak Republic, China and Australia.

Follow-up to previous inquiries

34. Following up inquiries, evidence sessions and reports is something we take seriously. In our first year of existence much of the follow-up we carried out was in relation to previous Reports of the former Science and Technology Committee. Letters relating to this work are published alongside this report. The issues covered include:

- Updates from the Medical Research Council about the progress of the UKCMRI project;[27]
- Drug reclassification: we followed up the Science and Technology Committee's work by writing to the Home Secretary in June 2008 when cannabis was reclassified asking how this related to evidence-based policy making;[28]
- Investigating the Oceans: We took oral evidence in April from the Secretary of State, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to follow up this Science and Technology Committee Report, and sought a follow-up memorandum to see what progress had been made in implementing the recommendations.[29] We are currently seeking a debate on this issue in Westminster Hall;
- Evidence-based policy making: we took further oral evidence on this important issue relating in particular to the use of government statistics;[30] and
- Doping in sport: the National Anti-Doping Organisation is to be made independent and given new powers, along the lines of recommendations made by the Science and Technology Committee in its Report on Human Enhancement Technologies in Sport.[31]

27 Ev 3, 11

28 Ev 4

29 Ev 15

30 Oral evidence taken before the Committee on 19 March 2008, HC (2007–08) 443-i

31 Ev 1

"As a Member who served on the former House of Commons Science and Technology (S&T) Select Committee I find the new Committee difficult to serve. We now meet twice a week in order to scrutinise the breadth of topics within the coverage of the new DIUS. Certainly STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects are not now getting the cross-Departmental scrutiny that the former Committee were able to give them.

"The former S&T Committee produced three reports that assisted Members in understanding the difficult concepts contained in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill. In this field scientific advances have been challenging the law for some time, and the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 was long overdue for reform.

"Sadly, the Government failed to accept important recommendations contained in 'Investigating the Oceans', particularly the need for a holistic UK marine strategy and a new organisation to co-ordinate it. I hope that our recommendations on the funding of science and discovery centres will be accepted. These diverse bodies play a key role in exciting our young people into pursuing a career in science or engineering."

Dr Brian Iddon MP

35. A debate was held in Westminster Hall on 15 May 2008 on the Science and Technology Committee's Report on Science and Discovery Centres,[32] and the House debated the Science Budget Allocations Report during an Estimates Day.[33]

36. Some of the inquiries completed this session will lend themselves to follow-up work in 2008-09. We are, for example, still awaiting information on the redevelopment of Pirbright following our Biosecurity Report, and also plan to take further oral evidence on the Science and Technology Facilities Council.

32 HC Deb, 15 May 2008, col 481WH

33 HC Deb, 7 July 2008, col 1212

3 Other activities and innovative practices

37. As the Select Committee whose remit covers 'Innovation' we aim to be innovative in our own practices: for example in this Report we have allotted space to individual Members to contribute their thoughts, something not done before.

38. Throughout the Session we have actively sought views from communities involved in further and higher education, skills, science and innovation policy, for example by holding a horizon-scanning event at Westminster. This was facilitated by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), whose mission is to "transform the UK's capacity for innovation". The sessions looked at broad areas of the new Committee's remit: innovation, further education and technical training, universities and competitiveness, use of evidence across Government and promoting good science. We found the session very informative, highlighting the priorities for the future programme and would like to repeat the exercise in 2009.

39. As a Committee aiming to be innovative we aim to use our inquiries to tackle important questions of the future. The presentation of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill during the 2007–08 Session shows that our predecessor, the Science and Technology Committee, showed foresight and we hope to emulate this, for example in our analysis of new technologies such as Plastic Electronics Engineering and whole new fields such as Geo-engineering.

"Previous work by a directly predecessor committee, the Science and Technology Committee, produced a report in 2005 entitled Human Reproductive Technologies and the Law. It received formal approval and was accompanied as predicted by a minority report. Much media exposure resulted but in a field where science involves ethics and morality this is not surprising. New technologies like nuclear transplantation, hybrids of animal and human cells, saviour siblings, mitochondrial diseases, genetic therapy, parthenogenesis etc were examined in public. Parliamentary scrutiny of changes and principles of the decision not to allow embryos beyond 14 days gave sufficient protection for patients.

"This year sees the fruition of this sterling report as the government moves to bring our approval of conclusions into regulation. Our report encouraged leaving abortion to a separate examination. Such detailed examinations are needed in issues where solid evidence and examination is required of both the moral and scientific dimensions of the argument. So much effort has gone into introducing this important bill and the issues should not be sidelined by debates on issues which have not been subject to proper parliamentary scrutiny."

Dr Ian Gibson MP

40. During the summer recess the Chairman conducted a series of September visits, continuing a practice started on the Science and Technology Committee. This is instrumental in building relationships between the Committee and stakeholder communities and a useful way of following-up previous inquiries, for example by visiting the Medical Research Council. The Committee continues to publish a quarterly update on its work in the magazine *Science in Parliament*, as did the former Science and Technology Committee.

41. We have made attempts to widen the participation in our inquiries to increase the variety of evidence received. Our inquiry into After Leitch: Implementing Skills and Training Policies was launched in Leeds with an evidence session focussed on planning and delivery of skills in the Yorkshire and the Humber region as a case study, held at the Town Hall. We have encouraged Members to act as rapporteurs, and as part of the After Leitch inquiry Gordon Marsden MP organised a meeting in Warrington, reporting back to the Committee.

42. The engineering inquiry has included two online consultations: the first was intended to gather input from employers and the second from young engineers and prospective engineers. The latter was launched with an event at Lambeth Academy, which runs the new engineering diploma, at which students from the Academy and the London Engineering Project had the chance to meet inspirational engineers: Dr Maggie Aderin of space engineering firm Astrium, John Armitt in his capacity as Chairman of the Olympic Delivery Authority, Richard Noble, from the Bloodhound land speed record team and Joe Milnes from UKAEA Culham. We also broadened our witness panel by using video-conferencing as part of our first evidence session on geo-engineering.

43. A number of our inquiries have opened with seminars designed to explore the issues and make our final report as pertinent as possible. This occurred for the inquiries into Biosecurity in UK Research Laboratories, Renewable electricity-generation technologies (held at the UK Energy Research Centre, Imperial College London) and Engineering (held at the Royal Academy of Engineering).

44. Lastly, we have to put on record the fact that we have had problems during the year with Members leaving the Committee and not being replaced. This is an issue not unique to our Committee: the Liaison Committee stated last year that "We have been concerned by the length of time it has taken in some instances to appoint and replace members of select committees. We urge the Leader of the House, the Committee of Selection and the Government and Opposition Whips to liaise more closely, and work together in order to speed up the nomination process."[34]

34 Liaison Committee, Third Report of Session 2007–08, *Work of Committees in 2007*, HC 427, para 74

4 Relations with the Government

45. Over the Session we have had a broadly productive and positive relationship with DIUS. The machinery of government changes that created the department inevitably caused some disruption and we were sometimes not notified in advance of the publication of departmental documents. However, active efforts to solve such teething difficulties are in progress. The Department has consistently provided memoranda and responses to our Reports within the requested timeframe, a particular challenge as some Government memoranda have included input from multiple departments and agencies; eight in the case of our inquiry into biosecurity in UK research laboratories.[35]

46. Unfortunately, there have been occasions on which the Department has, in our view, been less than fully co-operative. Despite an explicit request the Government failed to provide us with a written memorandum for the inquiry into the withdrawal of funding for ELQs. Following publication of our Report, which highlighted this, the Government Response made a commitment to do so in future, hopefully resolving the issue.[36]

47. More serious was an exchange of letters following the publication of the Government Response to our inquiry into Science Budget Allocations. The tone of the Response was not constructive and we wrote to DIUS setting out our concerns.[37] However, we feel that the Department, and the Secretary of State himself, failed to engage fully with the Committee, when he stated that:

> rather than entering into a detailed correspondence with the Committee on matters about which we are not in agreement, I would prefer to let the Government's response stand. [38]

48. If we accepted this view, we would be unable to fulfil our core task of following up our inquiries, and we hope that this high-handed approach will not be repeated.

35 Ev 51, para 1.10

36 Sixth Special Report from the Committee, Session 2007-08, *Withdrawal of funding for equivalent or lower level qualifications (ELQs): Government Response to the Third Report from the Committee*, HC 638

37 Ev 9

38 Ev 11

"The role of the Committee in scrutinising the application of science and evidence across Government has assumed new importance, especially since the commitment of the Government to evidence-based policy making—previously commendable—has recently come under question. In the last year we have seen:

- The Home Office deciding to re-classify cannabis as Class B against the explicit advice of its expert advisers;
- the criticism by the Chair of the UK Statistics Authority of Downing Street advisers over knife crime figures;
- a statement in the response by the Government to the Science and Technology Committee Report on Scientific Developments Relating to the Abortion Act 1967 being described as 'thoroughly embarrassing' and 'quite unacceptable' by the then Government Chief Scientific Adviser."

Dr Evan Harris MP

49. There were also some problems during our scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill, when we were given little notice of the timing of publication. These issues, and some other points about the quality of the information we were given, are set out in detail in our Report on Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill.[39]

50. In taking evidence for our inquiry into the Departmental Annual Report, we asked to see all of the DIUS Ministers in turn, appearing together with the Secretary of State in one session. The Secretary of State instead appeared with only the Permanent Secretary, Ian Watmore. We were disappointed that this request, which we considered to be reasonable, was refused.

51. The former Science and Technology Committee held a regular Science Question Time session with Lord Sainsbury when he was Minister for Science given that his membership of the House of Lords denied MPs the opportunity to question him in the House of Commons.[40] This practice continued when Malcolm Wicks MP was Minister for Science but ceased when his successor, Ian Pearson MP, took the post. The appointment of Lord Drayson as Minister for Science is an opportunity to revive this most useful scrutiny opportunity, we are delighted that Lord Drayson has agreed to take up the challenge, and we expect the first Science Question Time to take place in January 2009.

39 Seventh Report of the Committee, Session 2007-08, HC 1062-I

40 Science and Technology Committee, Fourth Report of Session 2003–04, *The Office of Science and Technology; Scrutiny Report 2003*, HC 316, Q 77

5 Conclusion

52. It has been an interesting and challenging year both for the new Department and for us as its scrutinising Committee. The previous Science and Technology Committee set us a high standard in looking at science policy. It has been challenging—if not impossible—to do justice to all the different parts of the DIUS portfolio. The list of inquiries and evidence sessions we have completed shows that we have conducted thorough scrutiny across all our subject areas. We have brought some of the lessons learned through the work of the Science and Technology Committee, particularly on evidence-based policy making, to bear on these wider subjects and hope to continue this work throughout the next Session.

6 Abbreviations

DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
DTI	Department for Trade and Industry
ELQ	Equivalent or Lower Qualification
EPSRC	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GCSA	Government Chief Scientific Adviser
GO-Science	Government Office for Science
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
MRC	Medical Research Council
NDPB	Non-departmental Public Body
NESTA	National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
OSI	Office of Science and Innovation
OFFA	The Office For Fair Access
STFC	Science and Technology Facilities Council
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SIN	Science and Innovation Network
UKCMRI	UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation

Annex

Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee

For website access click on www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

The Committee was nominated by the House of Commons on 8 November 2007.

Members	**Meetings attended**
Willis, Mr Phil (Chairman from 14.11.07)	49 out of 50
Afriyie, Adam (discharged 17.12.07)	0 out of 5
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	22 out of 50
Boswell, Tim (added 17.12.07)	33 out of 45
Cawsey, Ian	27 out of 50
Dorries, Mrs Nadine	1 out of 50
Gibson, Dr Ian	40 out of 50
Harris, Dr Evan	38 out of 50
Iddon, Dr Brian	45 out of 50
Marsden, Mr Gordon	34 out of 50
Spink, Bob	1 out of 50
Stewart, Ian	29 out of 50
Stringer, Graham	22 out of 50
Turner, Dr Desmond	32 out of 50
Wilson, Mr Rob	6 out of 50
Overall Attendance:	**54.1 %**

Total number of meetings:	50
Of which:	
Number of meetings at which oral evidence was taken[41]	33
Number of times oral evidence was taken partly or wholly in private	0
Number of wholly private meetings	17
Number of concurrent meetings with other committees	0
Other activities	
Informal meetings (including overseas visitors)	4
Conferences/Seminars hosted	4

Staff

Details of the permanent staff of the Committee during the Session can be found in the Committee's publications.

Specialist Advisers during the Session

Professor Sir Roy Anderson, Professor Donal Bradley, Professor Joe Brownlie, Professor Alison Fuller, Professor Mike Gregory CBE, Professor Colin Howard, Dr Paul Howarth, Chris Hughes, Professor Nicholas Jenkins, Professor Ewart Keep, Professor Peter Liss, Professor Peter Pearson, Dr Hayaatun Sillem and Professor Lorna Unwin.

[41] On one occasion the Committee's meeting included two separate oral evidence sessions.

Witnesses

Oral Evidence was given during the Session by the following categories of witnesses:

Number of appearances by:	
Cabinet Ministers	2
Other Ministers	9
Member of the House of Lords (of which four were Ministers)	7
Number of appearances by officials from, or representatives of:	
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	4
Department for Communities and Local Government	2
Department for Energy and Climate Change	2
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	11
Number of appearances by officials from, or representatives of public bodies and non-Ministerial departments comprising:	
Economic and Social Research Council	1
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	6
Higher Education Funding Council for England	2
Learning and Skills Council	2
Medical Research Council	1
Office for Fair Access	1
Science and Technology Facilities Council	3
Research Councils UK	1
Other Witnesses	106

Overseas Visits

Date	Destination	Members	Staff	Purpose	Cost
3-5.3.08	Berlin, Germany	Willis, Boswell, Cawsey, Harris, Turner	2	Renewable Electricity Inquiry	£7,393.64
27.3.08	Geneva, CERN	Blackman-Woods, Boswell, Cawsey, Harris, Stewart	2	Research Laboratories	£1,138.91
23-24.4.08	Bucharest, Romania[A]	Blackman-Woods	0	European Forum on Habitat	£898.60
18-24.10.08	Beijing and Shanghai, China, and Tokyo, Japan	Willis, Blackman-Woods, Boswell, Iddon, Stewart, Turner	2	Engineering Inquiry	£52,275.54 (estimate)

[A] Travel in a representative capacity

Visits to European Institutions

None.

UK Visits

Date	Destination	Members	Staff	Purpose	Cost
31.1.08	Rutherford Appleton Laboratory	Willis, Harris, Stewart	1	Science Budget Allocations Inquiry	£200.80

Date	Destination	Members	Staff	Purpose	Cost
4.2.08	Edinburgh[A]	Willis, Stewart	1	Science Budget Allocations Inquiry	£1,095.91
18.2.08	Daresbury Laboratory	Willis, Blackman-Woods, Harris, Iddon, Stringer	2	Science Budget Allocations Inquiry	£1,111.50
27.02.08	British Library[A]	Willis	2	Digitisation Open Day	
3.6.08	AQA, Guildford[A]	Willis, Boswell, Stewart	2	AQA Inquiry	£96.40
15.7.08	Sizewell B, Leiston, Suffolk	Willis, Blackman-Woods, Iddon, Spink	3	Nuclear Engineering Inquiry	£637.95
2.9.08	Sellafield and Westlakes Research Institute[A]	Willis, Blackman-Woods	2	Engagement with the broader DIUS community to inform Committee programme	£511.83
17.9.08	Imperial College London, and The Royal Society, London[A]	Willis, Harris	3	Engagement with the broader DIUS community to inform Committee programme	£24.80
18.9.08	Medical Research Council and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, London[A]	Willis	3	Engagement with the broader DIUS community to inform Committee programme	
26. 9.08	Culham Institute, Research Councils UK, and Technology Strategy Board[A]	Willis	2	Engagement with the broader DIUS community to inform Committee programme	£536.00
30.9.08	Printable Electronic Technology Centre, County Durham[A]	Willis, Blackman-Woods	1	Engagement with the broader DIUS community to inform Committee programme	£487.70

[A] Travel in a representative capacity

Reports and Oral and Written Evidence

Title	HC No. (2007–08)	Date of publication	Government reply
First Report: *UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation*	185	23.1.08	Received 31.3.08: published as Third Special Report Session 2007–08
Second Report: *The work and operation of the Copyright Tribunal*	245	20.3.08	Received 16.6.08: published as Fifth Special Report Session 2007–08
Third Report: *Withdrawal of funding for equivalent or lower level qualifications (ELQs)*	187-I	27.3.08	Received 17.6.08: published as Sixth Special Report Session 2007–08
Oral and Written Evidence: *Withdrawal of funding for equivalent or lower level qualifications (ELQs)*	187-II	27.3.08	Not applicable
Fourth Report: *Science Budget Allocations*	215-I	30.4.08	Received 17.6.08: published as Seventh Special Report Session 2007–08
Oral and Written Evidence: *Science Budget Allocations*	215-II	30.4.08	Not applicable
Fifth Report: *Renewable electricity-generation technologies*	216-I	19.6.08	Received 16.10.08: published as Eighth Special Report Session 2007–08
Oral and Written Evidence: *Renewable electricity-generation technologies*	216-II	19.6.08	Not applicable
Sixth Report: *Biosecurity in UK research laboratories*	360-I	25.6.08	Received 26.9.08: published as Ninth Special Report Session 2007–08
Oral and Written Evidence: *Biosecurity in UK research laboratories*	360-II	25.6.08	Not applicable
Seventh Report: *Pre-legislative scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill*	1062-I	5.12.08	Awaited
Oral and Written Evidence: *Pre-legislative scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill*	1062-II	5.12.08	Not applicable
First Special Report: *The Funding of Science and Discovery Centres: Government Response to the Eleventh Report from the Science and Technology Committee, Session 2006–07*	241	16.1.08	Not applicable
Second Special Report: *The Last Report: Government Response to the Thirteenth Report from the Science and Technology Committee, Session 2006–07*	244	24.1.08	Not applicable

Title	HC No. (2007–08)	Date of publication	Government reply
Third Special Report: *The UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2007–08*	459	31.3.08	Not applicable
Fourth Special Report: *Investigating the Oceans: Government Response to the Tenth Report from the Science and Technology Committee, Session 2006–07*	506	15.5.08	Not applicable
Fifth Special Report: *The work and operation of the Copyright Tribunal: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2007–08*	637	16.6.08	Not applicable
Sixth Special Report: *Withdrawal of funding for equivalent or lower level qualifications (ELQs): Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2007–08*	638	17.6.08	Not applicable
Seventh Special Report: *Science Budget Allocations: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2007–08*	639	17.6.08	Not applicable
Eighth Special Report: *Renewable electricity-generation technologies: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2007–08*	1063	16.10.08	Not applicable
Ninth Special Report: *Biosecurity in UK research laboratories: Government Response to the Sixth Report from the Committee, Session 2007–08*	1111	27.11.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence: *The Sainsbury Review*	113-i	31.10.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence: *Higher Education Issues*	114-i	27.11.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence: *The Role of the Government Chief Scientific Adviser*	115-i	27.11.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence: *Government Chief Scientific Adviser Designate: Introductory Hearing*	116-i	27.11.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence: *The use of Government Statistics in Evidence Based Policy Making*	443-i	31.10.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence: *The Leitch Review of Skills*	471-i	31.10.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence: *The Office for Fair Access (OFFA)*	598-i	31.10.08	Not applicable

Title	HC No. (2007–08)	Date of publication	Government reply
Oral Evidence: *The Quality Assurance Agency's Recent Reports on Standards in Universities*	905-i	27.11.08	Not applicable
Memoranda: *Engineering*		13.5.08	Not applicable
Memoranda: *After Leitch: Implementing Skills and Training Policies*		22.5.08	Not applicable
Memoranda: *Plastic Electronics Engineering*		19.6.08	Not applicable
Memoranda: *Nuclear Engineering*		10.7.08	Not applicable
Memoranda: *Science Budget Allocations*		16.7.08	Not applicable
Memoranda: *Geo-engineering*		14.10.08	Not applicable
Memoranda: *Engineering in Government*		19.11.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *The Formation of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills*	186-i	19.2.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Engineering*	470-i	21.5.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Engineering*	470-ii	12.6.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Engineering*	470-iii	19.6.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *After Leitch: Implementing Skills and Training Policies*	505-i	10.6.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *After Leitch: Implementing Skills and Training Policies*	505-ii	2.7.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *After Leitch: Implementing Skills and Training Policies*	505-iii	22.7.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *After Leitch: Implementing Skills and Training Policies*	505-iv	6.8.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *After Leitch: Implementing Skills and Training Policies*	505-v	12.11.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Plastic Electronics Engineering*	599-i	15.7.08	Not applicable

Title	HC No. (2007–08)	Date of publication	Government reply
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Plastic Electronics Engineering*	599-ii	15.7.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Nuclear Engineering*	640-i	24.7.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Nuclear Engineering*	640-ii	21.11.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *DIUS's Departmental Report 2008*	999-i	4.11.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *DIUS's Departmental Report 2008*	999-ii	18.11.08	Not applicable
Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *DIUS's Departmental Report 2008*	999-iii	1.12.08	Not applicable
Uncorrected Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Plastic Electronics Engineering*	599-iii	7.11.08	Not applicable
Uncorrected Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Nuclear Engineering*	640-iii	6.11.08	Not applicable
Uncorrected Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Geo-engineering*	1064-i	17.11.08	Not applicable
Uncorrected Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council: Recent Developments and Introductory Hearing*	1170-i	20.11.08	Not applicable
Uncorrected Oral Evidence published on the Internet: *Geo-engineering*	1202-i	24.11.08	Not applicable

Government replies to Reports for Session 2006–07

None.

Formal Minutes

The Formal Minutes of the Committee were published electronically after each meeting of the Committee. They are available on the Committee's website at http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

Divisions

Date	Subject
14.11.07	One, Election of Chairman

Debates

The following Report and Special Report were the subject of an Estimates Day debate:

Fourth Report, Session 2007–08, Science Budget Allocations, HC 215-I and Seventh Special Report, Session 2007–08, Science Budget Allocations: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2007–08, HC 639 Science Budget Allocations, 7.7.08

The following Special Report was the subject of a Westminster Hall Adjournment Debate:

First Special Report, Session 2007–08, The Funding of Science and Discovery Centres: Government Response to the Eleventh Report from the Science and Technology Committee, Session 2006–07, HC 241, The Funding of Science and Discovery Centres, Eleventh Report from the Science and Technology Committee, Session 2006–07, HC 903-I, Session 2006-07, 15.5.08

Number of oral evidence sessions for each inquiry during the Session

Inquiry	Number of oral evidence sessions
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills Departmental Report 2008	3
Engineering	3
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council: recent developments and introductory hearing	1
Engineering in Government	1
Equivalent or lower level qualifications	1
Formation of DIUS	1
Geo-Engineering	1
Higher Education Issues	1
Introductory Hearing with the Government Chief Scientific Adviser Designate	1
Nuclear engineering	3
Plastic electronics engineering	3
Renewable electricity-generation technologies	4
Science Budget Allocations	3
Scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill	2
The Leitch Review of Skills	1
The Office for Fair Access (OFFA)	1
The role of the Government Chief Scientific Adviser	1
The Sainsbury Review	1
The use of Government statistics in evidence-based policy-making	1
UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation	1
Total	34

The work and operation of the Copyright Tribunal Sub-committee

For website access click on www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

The Committee was nominated by the House of Commons on 17 January 2008.

Members	**Meetings attended**
Gibson, Dr Ian (Chairman)	1 out of 1
Boswell, Tim	1 out of 1
Cawsey, Ian	1 out of 1
Iddon, Dr Brian	1 out of 1
Turner, Dr Desmond	0 out of 1
Willis, Mr Phil	1 out of 1
Overall Attendance:	**83.3 %**

Total number of meetings:	1
Of which:	
Number of meetings at which oral evidence was taken	1
Number of times oral evidence was taken partly or wholly in private	0
Number of wholly private meetings	0
Number of concurrent meetings with other committees	0

Other activities

Informal meetings	0
Conferences/Seminars hosted	0

Staff

Details of the permanent staff of the Committee during the Session can be found in the Committee's publications.

Specialist Advisers during the Session

None.

Witnesses

Oral Evidence was given during the Session by the following categories of witnesses:

Number of appearances by officials from, or representatives of non-departmental public bodies;	
Copyright Tribunal	1
Other Witnesses	7

Overseas Visits

None.

Visits to European Institutions

None.

UK Visits

None.

Reports and Oral and Written Evidence

None.

Government replies to Reports for Session 2006–07

Not applicable.

Formal Minutes

The Formal Minutes of the Committee were published electronically after each meeting of the Committee. They are available on the Committee's website at http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

Divisions

None.

Debates

None.

Number of oral evidence sessions for each inquiry during the Session

Inquiry	Number of oral evidence sessions
The work and operation of the Copyright Tribunal	1
Total	1

Biosecurity in UK Research Laboratories Sub-committee

For website access click on www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

The Committee was nominated by the House of Commons on 17 January 2008.

Members	**Meetings attended**
Willis, Mr Phil (Chairman)	3 out of 3
Boswell, Tim	2 out of 3
Cawsey, Ian	3 out of 3
Gibson, Dr Ian	3 out of 3
Harris, Dr Evan	2 out of 3
Iddon, Dr Brian	3 out of 3
Stringer, Graham	0 out of 3
Overall Attendance:	**76.2 %**

Total number of meetings:	3
Of which:	
Number of meetings at which oral evidence was taken	3
Number of times oral evidence was taken partly or wholly in private	0
Number of wholly private meetings	0
Number of concurrent meetings with other committees	0

Other activities

Informal meetings	0
Conferences/Seminars hosted	1

Staff

Details of the permanent staff of the Committee during the Session can be found in the Committee's publications.

Specialist Advisers during the Session

Professor Joe Brownlie and Professor Colin Howard.

Witnesses

Oral Evidence was given during the Session by the following categories of witness:

Number of appearances by:	
Other Ministers	4
Members of the House of Lords (of whom two were Ministers)	4
Number of appearances by officials from, or representatives of:	

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	2
Number of appearances by officials from, or representatives of public bodies and non-Ministerial departments comprising:	
Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens	1
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council	1
Medical Research Council	1
Other witnesses	6

Overseas Visits

Date	Destination	Members	Staff	Purpose	Cost
3-5.3.08	Berlin, Germany	Willis, Boswell, Cawsey, Harris	2	Biosecurity in UK Research Laboratories Inquiry	£ 3,101.97

Visits to European Institutions

None.

UK Visits

Date	Destination	Members	Staff	Purpose	Cost
28.2.08	Pirbright	Willis, Boswell, Cawsey, Harris	2	Biosecurity in UK Research Laboratories inquiry	£77.40
20.3.08	Porton Down	Willis, Boswell, Harris	2	Biosecurity in UK Research Laboratories Inquiry	£588.85

Reports and Oral and Written Evidence

None.

Government replies to Reports for Session 2006–07

Not applicable.

Formal Minutes

The Formal Minutes of the Committee were published electronically after each meeting of the Committee. They are available on the Committee's website at http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm.

Divisions

None.

Debates

None.

Number of oral evidence sessions for each inquiry during the Session

Inquiry	Number of oral evidence sessions
Biosecurity in UK research laboratories	3
Total	3

Investigating the oceans Sub-committee

For website access click on www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

The Committee was nominated by the House of Commons on 22 April 2008.

Members	**Meetings attended**
Willis, Mr Phil (Chairman)	1 out of 1
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	0 out of 1
Boswell, Tim	0 out of 1
Cawsey, Ian	0 out of 1
Dorries, Mrs Nadine	0 out of 1
Gibson, Dr Ian	1 out of 1
Harris, Dr Evan	0 out of 1
Iddon, Dr Brian	1 out of 1
Marsden, Mr Gordon	0 out of 1
Spink, Bob	0 out of 1
Stewart, Ian	1 out of 1
Stringer, Graham	0 out of 1
Turner, Dr Desmond	0 out of 1
Wilson, Mr Rob	0 out of 1
Overall Attendance:	**28.6 %**

Total number of meetings:	1
Of which:	
Number of meetings at which oral evidence was taken	1
Number of times oral evidence was taken partly or wholly in private	0
Number of wholly private meetings	0
Number of concurrent meetings with other committees	0

Other activities

Informal meetings	0
Conferences/Seminars hosted	0

Staff

Details of the permanent staff of the Committee during the Session can be found in the Committee's publications.

Specialist Advisers during the Session

None.

Witnesses

Oral Evidence was given during the Session by the following categories of witnesses:

Number of appearances by:	
Cabinet Ministers	1
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	1

Overseas Visits

None.

Visits to European Institutions

None.

UK Visits

None.

Reports and Oral and Written Evidence

None.

Government replies to Reports for Session 2006–07

Not applicable.

Formal Minutes

The Formal Minutes of the Committee were published electronically after each meeting of the Committee. They are available on the Committee's website at http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

Divisions

None.

Debates

None.

Number of oral evidence sessions for each inquiry during the Session

Inquiry	Number of oral evidence sessions
Investigating the oceans	1
Total	1

After Leitch: Implementing Skills and Training Policies Sub-committee

For website access click on www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

The Committee was nominated by the House of Commons on 7 May 2008.

Members	Meetings attended
Willis, Mr Phil (Chairman)	5 out of 5
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	2 out of 5
Boswell, Tim	4 out of 5
Cawsey, Ian	3 out of 5
Dorries, Mrs Nadine	0 out of 5
Gibson, Dr Ian	2 out of 5
Harris, Dr Evan	0 out of 5
Iddon, Dr Brian	4 out of 5
Marsden, Mr Gordon	5 out of 5
Spink, Bob	0 out of 5
Stewart, Ian	4 out of 5
Stringer, Graham	0 out of 5
Turner, Dr Desmond	4 out of 5
Wilson, Mr Rob	0 out of 5
Overall Attendance:	**47.1 %**

Total number of meetings:	5
Of which:	
Number of meetings at which oral evidence was taken	5
Number of times oral evidence was taken partly or wholly in private	0
Number of wholly private meetings	0
Number of concurrent meetings with other committees	0

Other activities

Informal meetings	0
Conferences/Seminars hosted	0

Staff

Details of the permanent staff of the Committee during the Session can be found in the Committee's publications.

Specialist Advisers during the Session

Professor Ewart Keep and Chris Hughes.

Witnesses

Oral Evidence was given during the Session by the following categories of witnesses:

Number of appearances by:	
Other Ministers	1
Number of appearances by officials from, or representatives of:	
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	1
Number of appearances by officials from, or representatives of public bodies and non-Ministerial departments comprising:	
Higher Education Funding Council for England	1
Learning and Skills Council	2
Other witnesses	27

Overseas Visits

None.

Visits to European Institutions

None.

UK Visits

Date	Destination	Members	Staff	Purpose	Cost
14.5.08	Leeds	Willis, Blackman-Woods, Boswell, Marsden	4[A]	After Leitch: Implementing Skills and Training Policies Inquiry	£3,040.05

[A] Includes 1 shorthand writer

Reports and Oral and Written Evidence

None.

Government replies to Reports for Session 2006–07

Not applicable.

Formal Minutes

The Formal Minutes of the Committee were published electronically after each meeting of the Committee. They are available on the Committee's website at http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

Divisions

None.

Debates

None.

Number of oral evidence sessions for each inquiry during the Session

Inquiry	Number of oral evidence sessions

Inquiry	Number of oral evidence sessions
After Leitch: Implementing Skills And Training Policies	5
Total	5

Quality Assurance Agency: Recent Reports on Standards in Universities Sub-committee

For website access click on www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

The Committee was nominated by the House of Commons on 7 July 2008.

Members	Meetings attended
Willis, Mr Phil (Chairman)	1 out of 1
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	0 out of 1
Boswell, Tim	1 out of 1
Cawsey, Ian	0 out of 1
Dorries, Mrs Nadine	0 out of 1
Gibson, Dr Ian	0 out of 1
Harris, Dr Evan	1 out of 1
Iddon, Dr Brian	0 out of 1
Marsden, Mr Gordon	0 out of 1
Spink, Bob	0 out of 1
Stewart, Ian	0 out of 1
Stringer, Graham	0 out of 1
Turner, Dr Desmond	0 out of 1
Wilson, Mr Rob	1 out of 1
Overall Attendance:	**28.6 %**

Total number of meetings:	1
Of which:	
Number of meetings at which oral evidence was taken	1
Number of times oral evidence was taken partly or wholly in private	0
Number of wholly private meetings	0
Number of concurrent meetings with other committees	0

Other activities

Informal meetings	0
Conferences/Seminars hosted	0

Staff

Details of the permanent staff of the Committee during the Session can be found in the Committee's publications.

Specialist Advisers during the Session

None.

Witnesses

Oral Evidence was given during the Session by the following categories of witnesses:

Other Witnesses	3

Overseas Visits

None.

Visits to European Institutions

None.

UK Visits

None.

Reports and Oral and Written Evidence

None.

Government replies to Reports for Session 2006–07

Not applicable.

Formal Minutes

The Formal Minutes of the Committee were published electronically after each meeting of the Committee. They are available on the Committee's website at http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

Divisions

None.

Debates

None.

Number of oral evidence sessions for each inquiry during the Session

Inquiry	Number of oral evidence sessions
Quality Assurance Agency: Recent Reports on Standards in Universities	1
Total	1

Geo-Engineering Sub-committee

For website access click on www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

The Committee was nominated by the House of Commons on 17 November 2008.

Members	Meetings attended
Willis, Mr Phil (Chairman)	1 out of 1
Blackman-Woods, Dr Roberta	0 out of 1
Boswell, Tim	0 out of 1
Cawsey, Ian	0 out of 1
Dorries, Mrs Nadine	0 out of 1
Gibson, Dr Ian	1 out of 1

Harris, Dr Evan	0 out of 1
Iddon, Dr Brian	1 out of 1
Marsden, Mr Gordon	1 out of 1
Spink, Bob	0 out of 1
Stewart, Ian	0 out of 1
Stringer, Graham	0 out of 1
Turner, Dr Desmond	0 out of 1
Wilson, Mr Rob	0 out of 1
Overall Attendance:	**28.6 %**
Total number of meetings:	1
Of which:	
Number of meetings at which oral evidence was taken	1
Number of times oral evidence was taken partly or wholly in private	0
Number of wholly private meetings	0
Number of concurrent meetings with other committees	0

Other activities

Informal meetings	0
Conferences/Seminars hosted	0

Staff

Details of the permanent staff of the Committee during the Session can be found in the Committee's publications.

Specialist Advisers during the Session

None.

Witnesses

Oral Evidence was given during the Session by the following categories of witnesses:

Number of appearances by:	
Other Ministers	2
Members of the House of Lords (of which one was a Minister)	1
Number of appearances by officials from, or representatives of:	
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	1
Number of appearances by officials from, or representatives of public bodies and non-Ministerial departments comprising:	
Research Councils UK	1
Other Witnesses	4

Overseas Visits

None.

Visits to European Institutions

None.

UK Visits

None.

Reports and Oral and Written Evidence

None.

Government replies to Reports for Session 2006–07

Not applicable.

Formal Minutes

The Formal Minutes of the Committee were published electronically after each meeting of the Committee. They are available on the Committee's website at http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius.cfm

Divisions

None.

Debates

None.

Number of oral evidence sessions for each inquiry during the Session

Inquiry	Number of oral evidence sessions
Geo-engineering	1
Total	1

Formal Minutes

Monday 15 December 2008

Members present:

Mr Phil Willis, in the Chair

Mr Tim Boswell
Ian Cawsey
Dr Ian Gibson
Dr Evan Harris
Mr Gordon Marsden
Dr Brian Iddon
Ian Stewart
Dr Desmond Turner
Rob Wilson

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report (*The work of the Committee in 2007-08*), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 52 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman make the Report to the House.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported to the House for printing with the Report.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 14 January at 9.00am

List of written evidence

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2008–09

First Report	Re-skilling for recovery: After Leitch, Implementing Skills and Training Policies	HC 48-I

Session 2007–08

First Report	UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation	HC 185 (HC 459)
Second Report	The work and operation of the Copyright Tribunal	HC 245 (HC 637)
Third Report	Withdrawal of funding for equivalent or lower level qualifications (ELQs)	HC 187–I (HC 638)
Fourth Report	Science Budget Allocations	HC 215 (HC 639)
Fifth Report	Renewable electricity-generation technologies	HC 216–I (HC 1063)
Sixth Report	Biosecurity in UK research laboratories	HC 360–I (HC 1111)
Seventh Report	Pre-legislative scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill	HC 1062-I
First Special Report	The Funding of Science and Discovery Centres: Government Response to the Eleventh Report from the Science and Technology Committee, Session 2006–07	HC 214
Second Special Report	The Last Report: Government Response to the Thirteenth Report from the Science and Technology Committee, Session 2006–07	HC 244
Fourth Special Report	Investigating the Oceans: Government Response to the Science and Technology Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2006–07	HC 506 [incorporating HC 469–i]

Appendices

Letter to the Chairman, Phil Willis MP, from Gerry Sutcliffe MP, Minister for Sport, Department for Culture Media and Sport

I am writing to let you know that today I will announce my agreement, in principle and subject to further detailed work, to a recommendation from the Board of UK Sport that our National Anti-Doping Organisation (NADO) takes on a range of new powers, and becomes independent of UK Sport. I would expect the new agency to be fully operational in advance of 2012.

This recommendation comes on the back of a six month review carried out by a Working Group of UK Sport and DCMS officials, looking at the most effective way for the UK's NADO to successfully face future challenges in the fight against doping in sport.

Uppermost of these challenges is the need to strengthen further our working relationships with colleagues in enforcement agencies, focusing more closely on those involved in the trafficking and supply of prohibited substances to our athletes. This is a priority for me, which is why I have established a cross-departmental anti-doping working group, tasked with increasing the effectiveness of the good working relationships we already have in place. It was with this in mind that the new functions and structure were proposed, and why I agree with them.

I strongly believe that the changes I am announcing are a step in the right direction, particularly as we move toward 2012. We have always taken the issue of doping in sport seriously and now, as a future host nation, we have the opportunity to show the world that this is the case. I have no doubt that you will agree that this is the right thing to do, and at the right time.

I have included a copy of our press release with this.[1]

December 2007

Letter to the Chairman, Phil Willis MP, from Lord McKenzie of Luton, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

PHYSICAL AGENTS DIRECTIVE ON ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS

As you know, the former Science and Technology Committee produced a report in 2006 entitled *Watching the Directives*. In my follow-up memorandum to the Committee dated 2 October 2007 I explained that the European Commission (EC) had indicated it may propose a delay to the transposition deadline for this Directive.

I am happy to report that the EC has published a proposed amendment Directive that, if passed, will delay the transposition deadline by 4 years to 2012.

The EC indicates in its proposal that this postponement is being carried out in order to prepare a substantive amendment to the Directive. The future amendment will aim to ensure that limits will not have an adverse effect on the practice of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), whilst ensuring appropriate protection of personnel. Moreover, it is intended to review the situation for all sectors where personnel are exposed to electromagnetic fields while carrying out their work.

HSE will continue to work with the EC, other Member States and affected stakeholders, including those in the medical and industrial communities, towards an outcome that provides appropriate access to the benefits available from the effective use of MRI and industrial processes, whilst ensuring workers are protected from potential risks to their health.

I will keep you updated on developments.

January 2008

---

[1] http://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/plans_for_new_national_anti-doping_organisation_announced/

Memorandum from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Implications of the FCO's New Strategic Framework for the Science and Innovation Network

In his Written Statement of 23 January 2008 the Foreign Secretary reported the conclusions of the Strategy Refresh launched in July 2007. The purpose of reviewing the FCO's Strategy was to ensure that the FCO focussed its effort and resources on those areas of greatest interest to the United Kingdom on which the Department could add greatest value. The revised strategy was developed following consultation with the FCO's key stakeholders at home and overseas.

The key elements of the new Strategic Framework are:

- Provision of a flexible global network of overseas Posts, serving the whole of the British Government.
- Four new policy goals: countering terrorism and weapons proliferation and their causes; promoting a low carbon, high growth, global economy; preventing and resolving conflict; and developing effective international institutions, above all the United Nations and the European Union.
- Delivery of three essential services: supporting the British economy (UK Trade and Investment); helping British nationals abroad (consular operations) and managing migration (in collaboration with the new UK Borders Agency).

These will constitute the FCO's Departmental Strategic Objectives for the period 2008–11. In order to maximise the outcomes delivered, the FCO has to prioritise its resources, while also meeting 5% annual reduction in its administration budget. Consequently, the FCO is obliged to reduce its investment in some other areas of work.

The FCO recognises the valuable contribution of the Science and Innovation Network to the work of Parliament, several Government Departments and the wider public sector. At present, Science and Innovation teams in Posts overseas carry out work on behalf of several Government Departments, the Research Councils, a number of Parliamentary Select Committees, Learned Societies, the Devolved Administrations and the English Regional Development Agencies, as well as a number of UK universities and companies. Currently this service is funded entirely by the FCO. In the period 2008–11, the FCO will continue to fund a significant part of the Science and Innovation Network. However, the FCO considers its own requirement could be met with a smaller Science and Innovation Network.

The cost of the network in 2008–09 will be approximately £5.4 million, excluding overhead costs. The FCO will meet all of these costs while future funding issues are considered. This funds around 95 full time equivalent staff in 39 Posts in 24 countries (of which some 21 full time equivalent positions are filled by UK-based staff, the rest being locally engaged staff). The FCO also funds seven full-time equivalent positions in the London management unit, responsible for business planning, performance metrics, finance, links with UK stakeholders, recruitment and training. The London unit also acts as the science team for the FCO as a whole. Additionally, the FCO will invest £1 million of programme funding in 2008–09 to support the work of the Network.

The FCO is discussing how other Departments and public bodies might contribute to the funding of the Network and its activities with a view to maintaining its integrity. These discussions are both direct with other Government Departments and in the Global Science and Innovation Forum (GSIF), chaired by the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser. The FCO is also discussing with them future arrangements for governance and management of the Network.

February 2008

Memorandum from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills

Funding and Tasking of the Science and Innovation Network

In response to a request from the Committee, each of our departments submitted a memorandum in February 2008 concerning the future of the Science and Innovation Network following the FCO Strategy Refresh. This joint memorandum updates the Committee on the conclusions of our discussions.

Science and innovation are top priorities for the Government, and the Science and Innovation Network plays a crucial role in helping to deliver our objectives. These include increasing collaboration in science and innovation with the best in the world, improving policy in this area at home and overseas and extending UK influence internationally. The network is an essential delivery body for many UK Government Departments and public sector organisations, as well as directly helping UK universities and companies.

Both Departments, and all members of the Global Science and Innovation Forum (GSIF), are clear that the network must continue.

DIUS has the responsibility for UK policy on science and innovation, and for the science budget. It also has a cross-Government responsibility for science and innovation through the Government Office for Science. The FCO has responsibility for managing staff in embassies, high commissions and consulates across the world. For the Science and Innovation Network to be a success, DIUS and the FCO need to work closely together. This already happens, and will continue under the new agreement.

In recognition of the importance of overseas science and innovation attachés to its international objectives, and those of GSIF partners, DIUS will assume responsibility for leading and managing the Science and Innovation Network (SIN). DIUS and FCO will co-fund this network in future and DIUS will host a management team of DIUS and FCO staff to oversee the network's operation

March 2008

Letter to the Chairman, Phil Willis MP, from Ian Pearson MP, Minister of State for Science and Innovation, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills

Thank you for your letter of 26 March. I was pleased to hear that, after considering our response to your report on the UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation, the Committee decided to publish it as its Third Special report of this session.

You did however express concern about our declining to produce quarterly reports to the Committee.

We have now considered your revised request for twice yearly updates on the current state of progress with the UKCMRI, and to be kept informed of major developments when they happen. I am content for this arrangement to be put in place by MRC and DIUS. We will submit a first report before the summer, and six monthly thereafter.

We look forward to working closely with the Committee to implement what the Committee rightly described as being potentially one of the most exciting developments in UK research, which could place the UK firmly at the forefront of world-class medical research, with substantial benefits for the public as well as for British science.

May 2008

Memorandum from the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills

FURTHER IUSS SELECT COMMITTEE QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THEIR FIRST REPORT OF SESSION 2007–08: UK CENTRE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

1. *Why was the treatment of income to the MRC Commercial Fund not previously consistent with government expenditure rules?*

The Department has always made regular financial returns to the Treasury that provide analysis of the use of voted provision from the Consolidated Fund. But the income and expenditure of the MRC Commercial Fund was not being reported to the Treasury before 2007–08. This was due to a misunderstanding about the correct treatment of the MRC Commercial Fund, which was seen as third party funds which fell outside the reporting regime.

From 2007–08 all of the MRC Commercial Fund income and expenditure has been brought within the budgetary regime.

2. *Why the MRC was able to keep the £106.9 million of the surplus but not the £92 million?*

The Department was able to demonstrate that it had received in the past specific Treasury approval to retain up to £106.9 million in the MRC Commercial Fund.

There were two elements to this:

— a £14 million general near cash resource limit; and

— £92.9 million related to a capital receipt.

On regularising the MRC Commercial Fund, DTI and Treasury agreed: (1) the previously authorised amounts should be added to the stock of EYF and (2) the accumulated funds beyond these authorised limits should be returned to the Exchequer.

3. *Was there something different about the income relating to the £92 million which prevented it being retained by the MRC?*

There was no Treasury authority to retain the amounts in the MRC Commercial Fund beyond the £106.9 million described above. Accordingly there was no authority to spend the £92 million and it was returned to the Exchequer.

May 2008

Correspondence between the Committee and the Home Office regarding the classification of Cannabis

Letter from the Chairman, Phil Willis MP, to Jacqui Smith MP, Secretary of State, Home Office

CLASSIFICATION OF CANNABIS

In 2006, the Science and Technology Committee, of which I was Chair, conducted an inquiry into the Government's handling of scientific advice, risk and evidence in policy making. As part of the inquiry, the Committee examined the relationship between scientific advice and the classification of illegal drugs. We found that the Government had largely failed to meet its commitment to evidence-based policy-making in this area. The Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee has taken up a watching brief as to how the relationship between ACMD and the Home Office develops.

The Government's policy that cannabis be reclassified as Class B runs contrary to the expert scientific advice provided by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. We would therefore be grateful for a memorandum on why the Home Office rejected the advice from ACMD, and how the decision on cannabis reflects the Government's commitment to evidence-based policy-making. I would appreciate it if you could provide this information by 13 June 2008.

June 2008

Letter from Vernon Coaker MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Home Office

Thank you for your recent letter to the Home Secretary, received on 3 June, asking for a memorandum on why the Government rejected the advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs about the classification of cannabis and how the decision on cannabis reflects the Government's commitment to evidence-based policy-making. Your letter has been passed to me for reply as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

I attach the Government's memorandum.

June 2008

Memorandum from the Home Office on the proposed reclassification of cannabis

This memorandum responds to the request from Phil Willis MP, Chairman of the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee, for an explanation of why the Home Secretary, on behalf of the Government, rejected the recent advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs about the classification of cannabis under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and how this decision on cannabis classification reflects the Government's commitment to evidence-based policy making.

The Government's decision to reclassify cannabis to a Class B drug, subject to Parliamentary approval, is a preventative measure. In our view, there is a compelling case for us to seek to plan prudently for the future: to act now rather than risk the future health of young people. We must ensure that the classification of cannabis reflects the alarming fact that skunk now dominates the cannabis market; and we must respond robustly to reverse the massive growth in the commercial cultivation of cannabis in the United Kingdom in the last few years. Reclassifying cannabis will help to drive the enforcement priorities.

The growing prevalence of skunk is the major change of substance in recent years. Skunk—the highest potency herbal cannabis—now makes up 80% of street seized cannabis, with a potency of around 16% which is up from 6% in 1995. It is against the background of increased potency, together with real public concern about the potential mental health effects of such cannabis use, that the Prime Minister announced in July 2007 that the Government would consider the classification of cannabis again to see whether it was right that cannabis should be moved back to Class B.

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs reported in April 2008 that based on its harmfulness to individuals and society, the majority of the Council's members took the view that cannabis should remain a Class C drug. They considered that the harmfulness of cannabis more closely equates with other Class C drugs than with those currently classified as Class B.

However, the Council acknowledged the possibility that use of stronger cannabis may increase the harm to mental health. Young people may be more at risk if they first use the drug at an early age—the Council refers to the average age of first use being 13. It also suggested that some young people might "binge smoke" to achieve maximum possible intoxication, in the same way that some treat alcohol. The Council concluded that if they do this, the consequences "may be very serious to their mental health".

As the Committee is aware, the process by which a drug is reclassified is statutory. Within that process there are distinct roles and responsibilities. It is the role of the Advisory Council to provide advice on harms, for Government to consider that advice and then to make policy decisions taking into account all relevant factors, and for Parliament to endorse or reject those decisions.

By the terms of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the Advisory Council advice on the classification of a substance is limited to its harmfulness to individuals and society. We do not dispute the Advisory Council's findings and we have fully taken into account its assessment of the harmfulness of cannabis in accepting all the recommendations bar that relating to classification.

The Government remains committed to evidence-based policy making. But policy making often involves an interpretation of the available evidence, and scientific advice is one, but not the only factor contributing to policy. Experience, values, and judgement are all important contributors to policy making.

As we set out more particularly in our Response to the Science and Technology Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2005–06, HC 1031, Drug classification: making a hash of it?, the knowledge inputs into the classification of a drug include public and political knowledge, taking into account potential long term impacts, even when the evidence is not conclusive at this time. As on other occasions, we have also taken into account the needs and consequences for policing priorities.

Where there is a clear and serious problem, but some uncertainty of a drug's full potential to cause harm, we must err on the side of caution and take such preventative action as necessary to protect the public. This is why the Government made the decision to seek to reclassify cannabis to Class B.

June 2008

Correspondence between the Committee and the Science and Technology Facilities Council regarding the Government's Response to the Committee's Report on Science Budget Allocations

Letter from the Chairman, Phil Willis MP, to professor Keith Mason, Chief Executive, Science and Technology Facilities Council

SCIENCE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

The Committee has considered the Government's Response to its Report on the Science Budget Allocations and has written to the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills in relation to it. Our primary concern with the Government's response is that it spoke on behalf of STFC on a number of occasions, where we would have preferred a response directly from STFC. We highlight these occasions below, as we consider STFC's responses point-by-point.

Para 53

We welcome STFC's decision to commission an independent organisational review. We would like a copy of the review upon completion.

Conclusion 10

Please could you provide a response to Conclusion 10.

Conclusion 11

STFC is right to characterise PPARC's strategy for solar-terrestrial physics (STP) as "continued investment in EISCAT but withdrawal from all other facilities", but wrong to characterise its Delivery Plan 2008–09—2011–12 similarly. The Delivery Plan stated: "We will cease all support for ground-based solar-terrestrial physics" (p 6). STFC argues that it "should not suspend the implementation of the policy previously agreed by PPARC in March 2006" (para 61 of the response). Since PPARC's intention was "to

maintain a capacity in ground-based STP" (see para 56 of the report), STFC should not characterise this intention as being in disagreement with our report. We urged STFC to suspend its decision to withdraw from all ground-based STP, not PPARC's decision to withdraw from some ground-based STP.

Conclusions 12, 13, 14 and 15

The Government has spoken on behalf of STFC in paragraphs 66 and 67 of the response. Please could you provide a response to these conclusions.

Conclusion 16

Please could you provide a response to conclusion 16.

Conclusion 17

Please could you provide a response to conclusion 17.

Conclusion 18

We are pleased that STFC has accepted our criticisms and recommendations on the matter of internal and external communications. We would like to receive a copy of the action plan for implementation of STFC's strategy to improve its communications structure and capability.

We are also pleased to hear that STFC has made a number of changes to improve internal communications. Please could you outline what these are and how you plan to review the effect of these changes.

Conclusion 21

In reference to the reviews of in-house research, which we labelled as "secretive" (para 95 of the report), STFC has responded by saying that "STFC does not agree that these reviews were 'secretive' [. . .] STFC always intended to publish these reports in a suitably anonymised form" (para 89 of the response). This does not tally with what Professor Keith Mason told us on 27 February 2008. In explaining to us why he set up the reviews of in-house research, he repeated what he told the reviewers: "I told them, 'You can be as honest with me as you like because this report is coming to me to advise me, it is not going to be shared with my managers or staff, so you can tell me what you really think'" (Q 326 of the oral evidence). A little later he went on to say that "the problem is that this exercise (ie, the reviews of in-house research . . .) is taking on a significance that it never was intended to have and does not deserve. In the light of that we will be making the reviews public and people will be able to see what they say" (Q 334 of the oral evidence).

To summarise, Professor Keith Mason told us that the reviews were commissioned under the assumption that they were for his eyes only, and that only after concern about the reviews had been expressed did STFC decide to make the reviews public. STFC's response said that it always been the intention to publish the reviews. Please could you explain the discrepancy between these two versions of events and say which one is correct.

We would appreciate a response to each of the points we have raised above by Friday 11 July.

June 2008

Response from Professor Keith Mason

SCIENCE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

Thank you for your letter of 25 June 2008. Before I address in detail the issues on which you have asked for further information, I thought it would be helpful to update the Committee on recent developments.

We have now completed the programmatic review, following a period of extensive consultation with the community. We have and will learn further lessons from this process of consultation and will introduce further improvements in our advisory structure.

Our investment plans are ambitious and forward-looking as well as affordable and will in our view sustain the UK's competitive edge. To make room for investment in important new opportunities, there will inevitably be some groups who will not be funded but we will work with them to manage the rundown of existing programmes sensitively. We recognise that concerns remain about grant funding and we are working with the community to address these.

One outcome of the programmatic review is that we have now reached agreement with the University of Manchester on continuing investment in e-Merlin at Jodrell Bank and have resolved positively the future of the ALICE project at Daresbury.

Finally the Committee will be aware that we have agreed with DIUS to carry out an Organisational Review. This process of both self-assessment and external scrutiny will enable us to identify further steps we can take to improve our organisation moving forward.

Paragraph 53

Both the report of the organisational review and an STFC action plan in response to it will be published. It is not yet possible to say when it will be complete as the first stage of the process is just underway. Copies will be made available to the Committee.

Conclusion 10

The STFC is not planning to cease investing in research in fields in which the UK excels. The choice is about how best to invest in these areas within our allocation to maintain the UK's competitive edge. The programme which the STFC has decided to support will enable us to exploit new world-class facilities, to participate in R&D for future new international facilities and to continue to exploit those existing facilities and projects which will continue to be highly productive and competitive. In order to invest in new opportunities we will reduce or cease funding in some specific programmes which we now judge are relatively less likely to deliver the highest scientific impact.

Conclusion 11

Our intent is to pursue the plans set in place by PPARC in March 2006 ie to invest in the EISCAT facility under the terms of our international agreement up to 2011 and to withdraw our support for other STP facilities. I apologise to the Committee for the lack of clarity about the STFC's position

We have and will continue to encourage the STP research community to pursue other sources of funding, perhaps through the Living with Environmental Change cross-Council initiative, and will seek to play an enabling role in any such discussion.

Conclusions 12, 13, 14, 15

I welcome this opportunity to re-state STFC's position on the future of Daresbury.

The STFC is fully committed to the development of the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus as a world-leading centre of excellence and leadership in scientific research, in technological innovation which underpins both advances in science as well as economic impact, and in knowledge exchange, building on expertise at Daresbury.

We are in the process of turning this ambition into "a concrete programme of future activity". Scientists and technologists at Daresbury are heavily involved in the new Light Source project. We have submitted plans to DIUS for capital investments in the Hartree Centre, a new computational science centre, and in a Detector Systems centre which will bring together scientific and industrial expertise to develop sensors for both research and commercial use. We will invest in accelerator science and technology R&D for the next generation of accelerator facilities including operating ALICE (ERLP) for the period of the spending review and to support EMMA, a medical accelerator prototype. We are pursuing co-funding opportunities with stakeholders including NWDA to sustain increased operations of ALICE.

The STFC does not preclude a new major science facility on the Daresbury campus but it cannot commit to it as part of its strategy. Our rote is to develop the science cases for future large scale facilities. Decisions on whether specific capital projects will be supported from the large Capital Facilities Fund are based on advice to Government from RCUK, which prioritises bids from across the Research Councils. The decision on where future facilities will be sited will be based on broader considerations, including the Government's and other stakeholders' strategies for the development of the Daresbury campus. Given that a decision on any future large facility is likely to be some years away, our focus is on building the scientific and technological capability on the Daresbury campus as outlined above.

In relation to Conclusion 15, the STFC is a national Research Council and must base its investment decisions on what it considers best to sustain the competiveness of the UK research base as a whole. In doing so we will work actively with a wide range of stakeholders including universities and the RDAs to ensure the UK has the necessary critical mass of expertise in support of science and innovation and public funding is deployed optimally.

Conclusion 16

The STFC's current view remains that its in-house programme is best managed coherently across its laboratories. This enables our laboratories to work both for their benefit and for the benefit of the UK research base as a whole and avoids unhealthy competition. Many of the Council's programmes are delivered by deploying resources from more than one laboratory and the current management structure ensures that these resources are used optimally. Within this structure a senior director located at the Daresbury and Rutherford Laboratories has designated responsibilities as Head of Site to ensure there is effective engagement with local external stakeholders, the staff and trade unions.

Conclusion 17

The STFC acknowledges the anxiety in the research community over the level of our grants investment in the spending review period. The STFC has not intentionally sought to play down the effects. It has been clear throughout that there will be a 25% cut in the planned volume of exploitation grants by the end of the CSR period.

However the situation is more complicated than this statement implies. We have therefore sought to explain that the full impact will be felt in different areas over different timescales. We have also sought to put these cuts into perspective. As we set out in a briefing note we provided to the Committee the cut in the volume, as measured by the number of postdoctoral researcher assistants (PDRAs) funded, of new particle physics and astronomy exploitation grants is 25% compared with the level of growth which PPARC had planned. However, in Astronomy, if comparison were made between the actual number of PDRAs funded in 2005–06 and the number we expected to fund in 2010–11, these would be essentially the same. In particle physics the situation is further complicated by the fact that rolling grants contain support both for the exploitation of and the construction of facilities, so the number of PDRAs is also affected by the ebb and flow as projects come and go. Overall it is our view that the planned levels of exploitation grants will allow a good return on previous investment and that the balance between exploitation and construction is correct.

We have separately described the beneficial impact the additional funding of FEC will have on the number of staff supported by the STFC. Whilst we believe this analysis is of value we recognise that it may have overly complicated the picture and given the impression that we were down-playing the impact. This was not the intent.

Conclusion 18

The organisational review which will be published and made available to the Committee will outline our action plans for improvement in the area of communications.

Conclusion 21

These benchmarking reviews were intended to provide me with external independent advice on the current quality and competitiveness of our in-house research activities and help me take a view on what changes might be necessary to ensure it was resourced at the appropriate level.

In agreeing the terms of reference with the Panels, I considered it important that their reports to me should be in confidence since they were being asked to comment on the performance of our staff and such reviews must be handled sensitively.

It was never intended that they should be secretive in the sense that it was always my intention to make the outcome of these one-off reviews known to the management and staff of the in-house research teams being reviewed in deciding how we should plan for these activities moving forward.

I decided and agreed to make them more publicly available in the interests of transparency but only on condition that they were suitably anonymised. In conclusion may I welcome the contribution which the Committee has made in developing our understanding of the impact of our CSR settlement. There are clearly lessons to be learned particularly in relation to consultation and communications and we will do so. I very much took forward to engaging with the Committee on how we can best support and develop the UK's research base.

July 2008

Correspondence between the Committee and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, regarding the Government's Response to the Committee's Report on Science Budget Allocations

Letter from the Chairman, Phil Willis MP, to the Rt Hon John Denham MP, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills

SCIENCE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

The Committee has considered the Government's Response to its Report on the Science Budget Allocations and has a number of concerns. One general point is that the Government has, on several occasions, answered on behalf of the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC), rather than let it speak for itself on recommendations that are specifically relevant to it. Incidences where this has happened are noted below in a point-by-point consideration of the Response. We have written to STFC separately to ask for responses where we feel they would be helpful.

Conclusion 4, para 28

The Government has rejected our recommendation that documents prepared for bilateral negotiations between the Government and the Research Councils should be published as a matter of course. The reason given is, to paraphrase, that some information is commercially confidential and that the openness would put at risk "candid discussion and robust appraisal" during the allocation process. The first of these concerns did not prevent the release of the documents under the Freedom of Information Act and therefore should not prevent DIUS from releasing them as a matter of course. Commercially confidential information could always be removed prior to release. The second concern simply does not hold: we did not ask to see transcripts of discussions, but documents relating to the discussions. Further, keeping the negotiations confidential opens the Government up to accusations that it has inappropriately influenced the decisions that Research Councils take.

Conclusion 6, paras 38–40

We welcome the Government's willingness to make a statement on the Haldane Principle. It is not clear why the Government goes on to discuss peer review in this section, since peer review was not mentioned in recommendation 6 or its preceding text and was discussed later in the report. Be that as it may, the Government's assertion that we criticised "the outcome of STFC's peer review process" and "those researchers who have undertaken it" is an inaccurate paraphrasing of the serious concerns we raised in relation to STFC's peer review system and decisions made by STFC. We did not criticise the outcomes of STFC's peer review. Specifically:

(a) on the International Linear Collider, we did not comment on the scientific justification for withdrawal, but raised some concerns that had been put to us during the inquiry;

(b) on Gemini, we did not consider the merits of STFC's decision, but the way it went about making its decision, or as it turned out, indecision, public;

(c) on solar-terrestrial physics, we questioned Professor Mason's explanation for the withdrawal of funding, and suggested that STFC renege on that decision until its community had been properly consulted.

Neither did we criticise the members of the peer review panels. On the contrary, we acknowledged that STFC's peer review committees "have a difficult job to do" and that "we do not doubt the integrity of the individuals who make up those Committees" (p 32 of our report).

Conclusion 7, para 45

In response to our suggestion that the Government has failed to protect both the existing and planned research base by allocating insufficient funds to cover FEC and the new bodies, the Government has responded that: "the cross-Council programmes and research with the new bodies, are just as much Research Council activities, as any other [punctuation sic]." We have two concerns. First, we did not mention the cross-council programmes in this context. We said that insufficient funds were allocated to cover FEC and the new bodies.

Second, the new bodies were specifically created to promote the translation of research into wealth, which has been supported by this Committee. It is clear from our report and the Government's response that these new bodies are partially supported by a reallocation of money away from the existing research base towards translation. For example, the Government says in its response that "It is the role of Government to encourage the research base regularly to assess and adjust funding to take into account shifting priorities" and "It would not be appropriate to adopt an approach that only funded new initiatives after all existing activity is maintained" (para 43 of the response). This is precisely our concern. The Government has repeatedly reassured the science community that basic science will not be cut because of the increased emphasis on translation. The Government appears to have changed its stance.

Conclusion 8

The Government welcomes our recognition that STFC was formed without a budget deficit, but dismisses the fact that, in the words of Keith Mason, "the baseline budget allocation to [CCLRC . . .] was not fully raised to compensate for the running costs of Diamond and ISIS Target Station II" (para 37 of the report). To dismiss this observation on the grounds that Research Councils are only permitted to plan according to a flat cash settlement is not acceptable for two reasons. First, the building of Diamond and ISIS TS2 are national facilities, built with the blessing of the Government. The real running costs of these facilities have been known for a long time and CCLRC's baseline budget allocation should either have been set to rise to meet the requirements of the new facilities or the Government should have raised concerns about CCLRC's ability to fund the projects in the future. Second, STFC has inherited a shortfall in CCLRC's projected budget. The fact that STFC did not inherit an existing budget deficit does not negate either the problem nor the Government's responsibility for the budgetary shortfall.

Conclusion 10

We have asked STFC for a response to Conclusion 10.

Conclusions 12, 13, 14 and 15

On the matter of the relationship between the Haldane Principle and regional policy, the Government appears confused. The Government clearly has a regional policy (or should have a regional policy), since its has repeatedly stated that it wants "to strengthen science investment at Daresbury" (para 64 of the response). This desire leads the Government to have a "specific vision" for STFC to fund science at Daresbury (para 63 of the response). Whether or not this is a breach of the Haldane Principle, it is a clear breach of Government policy, that "Public funding of research at a national level, through the Research Councils and funding bodies, is dedicated to supporting excellent research, irrespective of its UK location" (Science and Innovation Investment Framework, 2004–14, p 146, para 9.52, our emphasis). In other words, according to its own guidelines, and arguably the Haldane Principle, the Government should not be putting pressure on Research Councils to put money in one place or another (as it has done by repeatedly voicing a desire to see world-class science facilities at Daresbury and by outlining its "specific vision for the Daresbury Campus [to be] a partnership between STFC [and others]"); that is for Research Councils to decide on the basis of the science. However, the Government is clearly and rightly determined that Daresbury should have a bright future. We therefore urge the Government to reconsider our recommendation that it produce a White Paper on Regional Science Policy as a basis for discussion as a matter of urgency.

On paras 66 and 67 of the response, we are concerned that Government is speaking for STFC. We have asked STFC for a response to these conclusions.

Conclusion 16

We are concerned that the Government has spoken for STFC on this matter. We have asked STFC for a response.

Conclusion 17

We are concerned that the Government has spoken for STFC on this matter. We have asked STFC for a response.

Conclusion 23, paras 94 and 96

In paragraph 94 of the response, the Government argues that "a decision to withdraw from a particular project on the grounds that it no longer remains a priority [cannot] justifiably be described as putting into question the UK's reliability as an international partner". Which decision is the Government referring to? It may be that if STFC had only pulled out of the International Linear Collider it would have had little impact on the UK's international reputation. (Although we did raise serious concerns about the manner in which the decision was taken; for example, according to Professor Peter Main of the Institute of Physics, the European leader of the ILC project, who is based at Oxford University, was not given any opportunity to present his case before the project was terminated [see para 50 of the report].) However, the clumsy way in which the Gemini project was handled (outlined on page 24 of the report) does raise questions about STFC's competency in handling international subscriptions.

In paragraph 96, the Government supports STFC over Gemini, stating that "STFC has never issued formal notice to withdraw from the project". This may strictly be true, but we point the Government to paragraph 53 of our report, in which we quote STFC: "While we sincerely regret the need to withdraw from Gemini, the current circumstances leave us no choice." In the same statement, STFC also said that "We will [. . .] be taking steps to issue formal notice to withdraw" (www.scitech.ac.uk/PMC/PRel/STFC/Gemini-Update.aspx). This has not happened and STFC has paid the UK's 2008 contribution.

Conclusion 29, para 110

The Government suggests that our decision to highlight the reduced share that AHRC received in this science budget allocation was "unhelpful and misleading". The Government justifies this conclusion on two grounds: that AHRC has a far lower requirement for non-cash and capital compared to other Councils, with which we agree; and that the level of near cash that AHRC received, having taken account of funding for FEC, was comparable to other Research Councils, with which we do not agree. AHRC received the smallest near cash increase relative to FEC in percentage terms of all the Research Councils—in fact, AHRC, like EPSRC, did not receive a near cash increase big enough to cover FEC.

It may be debatable whether our comments were "unhelpful"—unhelpful to whom—but they were not "misleading": AHRC did receive a reduced share of the science budget.

We are concerned by the tone of parts of the Government's response. For example, the Government labels our report as "unhelpful" three times and in doing so, takes some of our conclusions out of context. This response was produeed well within the two-month deadline. We believe that a longer period of consideration may have resulted in a more thoughtful and well-founded response to our report.

We would appreciate a response to each of the points we have raised above by Friday 11 July.

June 2008

Response from the Rt Hon John Denham MP, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills

SCIENCE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

Thank you for your letter of 25 June in which you made a number of observations on the Government's response to your Committee's report on the Science Budget allocations. I have a great respect for the Committee and its report and can assure you that it was given careful consideration before our response was submitted. I recognise that the Committee would have preferred the Government to agree with more of its recommendations but, rather than entering into a detailed correspondence with the Committee on matters about which we are not in agreement, I would prefer to let the Government's response stand.

You commented that the Government on some occasions responded to recommendations on behalf of STFC. Several of the Committee's conclusions were relevant to the responsibilities of both Government and Research Councils. We therefore regarded it as helpful to the Committee to draw together the views of the STFC and Government on occasions where this was appropriate, leaving it on others for the STFC alone to respond. This is the process we have followed in previous responses to Select Committees where the Government and Research Councils have relevant responsibilities.

July 2008

Letter to the Chairman, Phil Willis MP, from Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Chief Executive, Medical Research Council

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE UK CENTRE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Earlier this year the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee expressed the wish to receive regular progress reports on the development of the UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation. The Secretary of State subsequently agreed that the MRC should provide updates on a six monthly basis and I am pleased to be able to provide the first such report.

I am sure the Committee will appreciate that certain of the negotiations relating to the UKCMRI are considered to be sensitive, in relation to commercial interests and issues involving the staff of the partner organisations, and that information provided in my report necessarily has to take this into account.

In view of the level of interest in this ambitious and exciting project I would be very grateful if you could arrange for copies to be placed in the House Libraries. I hope too that you have no objections to my circulating this, and future reports to other Members of Parliament who have expressed an interest in the project in recent Parliamentary Questions to DIUS Ministers.

July 2008

THE UK CENTRE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (UKCMRI)

PROGRESS REPORT TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS INNOVATION, UNIVERSITIES, SCIENCE AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

1. *Introduction*

In the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee's First Report of Session 2007–08 (23 January), *UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation*, the Committee's second recommendation was:

> "We expect to receive quarterly updates, beginning in March 2008, on the development of the project with particular reference to the concerns highlighted (in the Report) from the MRC and DIUS and would much welcome similar briefings from the other partners". (Paragraph 13)

It was subsequently agreed by the Science Minister that DIUS and the MRC would submit progress reports on UKCMRI to the Committee every six months. This is the first such report.

Certain of the negotiations are commercially sensitive and/or may directly involve staff of the organisations, and the information provided to the Committee naturally has to take this into account.

2. *Programme governance*

The governance of the UKCMRI Programme is through a Steering Group, at the strategic level, and via a Programme Delivery Committee, at a tactical level; the latter directs the work of a number of work streams and project boards. The Steering Group comprising the CEOs of the four consortium members has now been joined by an independent Chairman, Sir David Cooksey. An organogram of the programme management structure is at Annex 1.

3. *Land acquisition*

The purchase of the Brill Place site was completed by the Wellcome Trust on 13 June. The Wellcome Trust will hold the site in trust on behalf of the consortium (under a Warehouse Agreement) until a decision is made on whether the eventual freehold ownership will be with a newly established Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) or with the four consortium members as tenants in common.

4. *Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)*

The Tax and Legal Work Group, on which all consortium members are represented, is advising on possible structures for the SPV and no decisions have been made at this stage.

5. *UKCMRI Construction Ltd*

The intention is that a design and build construction company set up by the consortium members should employ the professional design team for the UKCMRI building and eventually employ the contractor for construction services.

6. *Programme Director Appointment*

Interviews took place in May and early June to select a Programme Director and Ms Fay Gillot has been appointed. She took up the position on 30 June.

7. *Design Team appointments*

Interviews for the appointment of a professional design team for the UKCMRI building project were held in May. A shortlist of architects has been selected to go forward to a second round of interviews to be held on 28 July.

Appointments will be made for Project Managers, Mechanical & Electrical Engineers and Structural Engineers. The target start date is August 2008.

8. *The Translational Agenda*

The Scientific Planning Committee has been asked to consider and advise on how best to further the translational agenda that is a key element of the UKCMRI initiative. Consideration is being given to setting up a dedicated work group to follow up on that advice and to take forward the consortium's thinking on both clinical and commercial translation.

9. *Programme Gateway review process*

The UKCMRI programme will be reviewed through the Gateway process. Even though there are non-publicly funded partners in the UKCMRI consortium, the OGC has nevertheless agreed to participate and to review the whole programme rather than just the MRC's participation in it. As part of the overall programme review there will be an in-depth review of the building project. The first programme Gateway review, Gateway 0, is planned for October 2008.

10. *Detailed Business Case*

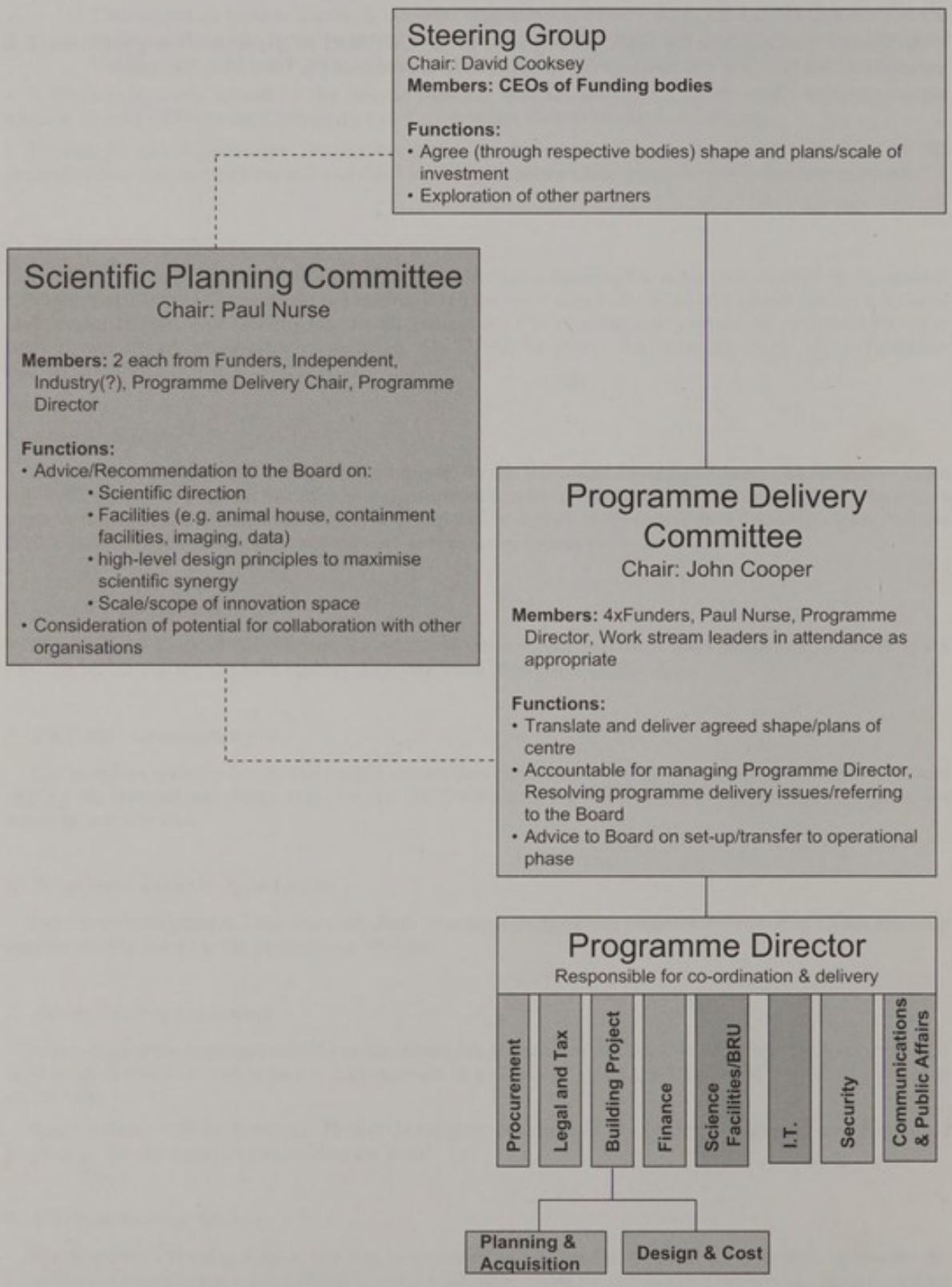
A detailed Business Case for MRC participation in the UKCMRI programme is being prepared. It is anticipated that the Case will be ready for submission to Government in November/December.

Annex 1

ORGANOGRAM OF PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

UKCMRI Governance & Delivery Structure

Annex 1



Letter from the Rt Hon John Denham MP, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills to the Chairman, Phil Willis MP

Thank you for your letter of 9 July about the independent research project into the impact of science and discovery centres. I am replying below to the three points you raise.

1. I agree that we would like to understand what role science centres play in encouraging young people to pursue STEM careers. In our response to the Committee's Inquiry we explicitly stated that the aim of this research would be to establish how effective science centres are compared with other delivery agents at helping Government to meet both its STEM and public engagement goals. Our STEM goals have always had a major focus on encouraging young people into STEM careers and what we say in Paragraph 8 about the purpose of the project and paragraph 15 on deliverables I think covers the point sufficiently.

So far as is possible, we will assess the impact which science centres and various comparator organisations have on STEM career choice. This may not be at all easy to do effectively, but we shall see how far the researchers are able to get. We will also encourage science centres to put forward evidence of meeting other government aims, where these are relevant to our broader science and society objectives.

2. On Friday 18 July I launched a consultation on developing a UK-wide strategy for science and society, in which we set out the key challenges of the STEM workforce agenda. I hope you will find this document a helpful contribution to the debate on what the nation's wider science and society goals should be.

In terms of what science centres will be measured against, there is no doubt a challenge to identify measures that allow us to compare science centres with other organisations. We envisage this study will provide a range of indicators including, of course, their success at encouraging STEM—which can be applied to other organisations that might be expected to deliver a comparable range of benefits.

3. On the issue of financial viability, you will recall the point made by all three departments in their response to the Committee, that a Centre failing in financial terms cannot be viewed as an effective delivery partner. In this context financial viability is principally about risk, and assessment of that would have to be part of any decision on whether to support a particular institution. It is not necessarily the principal factor for judging the relative value for money, in terms of achieving benefits for a chosen level of spending. In addition, you will be aware that the Treasury's Green book provides the Government framework for decisions on support.

I hope this response is helpful. We look forward to sharing the outcomes of this research project with you.

July 2008

Letter from the Rt Hon John Denham MP, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills to the Chairman, Phil Willis MP

At our meeting on 21 July you explained that the IUSS Committee would prefer responses to its reports from Research Councils to be submitted in separate documents, rather than being included within the text of the Government's responses. I am making arrangements for this to happen in respect of matters for which the Councils are directly responsible. However, where Councils provide advice to Government on matters which are properly the sphere of Government policy and therefore contribute to the Government's consolidated responses, Ministers will continue to be responsible for the final text of the Government's response. In these circumstances it would not be appropriate for the Councils' responses to be separately identifiable from the Government's response. The Councils will continue to submit their own evidence (oral and written) to the Committee.

September 2008

Update from DEFRA on progress in Implementing the Recommendations accepted by the Government in its response to the Science and Technology Committee's report into Investigating the Oceans

(a) *Progress in establishing the new Co-ordinating Committee, including work programme, membership, decisions over funding and achievements to date*

The MSCC met for the first time on Thursday 17 July 2008. Minutes of the meeting are attached. At that first meeting the Committee considered a paper from the MSCC Planning Group entitled *Establishing the New Marine Science Co-ordination Committee*. A copy is attached for reference.

The main conclusions of that first meeting can be summarised as follows:

- It was agreed that the Committee's primary responsibilities are firstly to develop and implement the UK Marine Science Strategy, and secondly to improve UK marine science co-ordination.
- The MSCC will develop and adopt a five year business plan. The main focus of the Committee's work over the coming year will be the development and adoption of the Strategy

- The Chairmanship of MSCC will be held jointly between Scottish Government and Defra, with full MSCC meetings held as required, probably twice a year.
- The MSCC Secretariat needs to be staffed by a team with key skills such as customer engagement, project management, science and policy writing as well as organisational ability. It will require strong leadership over the first 18 months during which the Strategy and Business Plan will be developed.
- On 15 October Defra's Central Approval Panel approved a budget of £600k to cover the costs of the secretariat for the next 18 months, including the development of the strategy.
- The MSCC will develop a number of working groups to help take forward the Committee's business, and these will involve wider stakeholder involvement.
- The scope and structure of the UK marine science strategy was broadly agreed and is as set out in the MSCC minutes (see paragraph 3.2).

(b) *A detailed timetable for the drafting and implementation of the marine science strategy*

Under the MSCC's guidance the Secretariat will take the lead in developing the strategy and the Committee's business plan. Recruitment of staff to the Secretariat is now underway in order to meet the deadline of publishing the strategy in the second half of 2009.

(c) *The impact of the recent machinery of government changes on responsibility for marine science*

When Defra's SoS met with the IUSS Committee on the 22 April, he confirmed that Defra will provide the Ministerial Lead for Marine Science and will chair a Group of Ministers, subject to agreement from the develoved administrations. The creation of the new department does not change Defra's leadership role for marine science.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change will be invited to become a member of MSCC. DECC will be a major funder of the Hadley Centre and support the development of large scale climate models that help predict global scale climate change scenarios. Research into the impact of climate change on the marine environment, at the UK level, remains with Defra.

November 2008

Printed in the United Kingdom by The Stationery Office Limited
1/2009 415519 19585

ISBN 978-0-215-52586-4

Distributed by TSO (The Stationery Office) and available from:

Online
www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail
TSO
PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN
General enquiries: 0870 600 5522
Order through the Parliamentary Hotline *Lo-call* 0845 7 023474
Fax orders: 0870 600 5533
E-mail: customer.services@tso.co.uk
Textphone: 0870 240 3701

TSO Shops
16 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GD
028 9023 8451 Fax 028 9023 5401
71 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9AZ
0870 606 5566 Fax 0870 606 5588

The Parliamentary Bookshop
12 Bridge Street, Parliament Square
London SW1A 2JX
Telephone orders: 020 7219 3890
General enquiries: 020 7219 3890
Fax orders: 020 7219 3866
Email: bookshop@parliament.uk
Internet: http://www.bookshop.parliament.uk

TSO@Blackwell and other Accredited Agents

ISBN 978 0 215 52586 4