



Press Release: 19 February 2009

CaSE response to Denham's speech on a "smarter approach to funding research"

The Campaign for Science & Engineering's Director, Nick Dusic, responds to John Denham's speech on a "smarter approach to funding research". Nick Dusic said:

"There is no doubt that the countries that prioritise science and engineering though this downturn will be more competitive in the future. Whilst our competitor countries are boosting their investment in research, ministers want to have a debate about how to re-organise the funding system. The government has had over ten years to debate and develop their science policy. Now is the time to back researchers and let them get on with it.

"The risk is that efforts to rebalance the economy will unbalance research funding. The UK's competitive advantage in science is the breadth of excellence in the research base. Unless there is a huge boost in the science budget, asking research councils to focus more of their funding on national priorities will mean that something has to give. Ministers need to be open about the potential tradeoffs inherent in this policy.

"Science and engineering are critical to a broad range of sectors in the UK. The research base has an important role to play, but to be useful this debate needs to be widened to look at how industry and government departments invest in R&D.

"The Chancellor needs to be clear in his budget statement that public investment in science will continue on an upward trajectory through the next spending review. The UK will lose out in attracting international talent and investment in research if it doesn't keep pace with other countries that are making substantial commitments to science."

Ends

Notes to editors

1. For further information, please contact Nick Dusic, Director of CaSE, on 020 7679 4995 or 07749 953041.

2. Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) is a policy advocate for science and engineering in the UK. CaSE is supported by its members, which includes individuals, corporations, universities and learned societies. Further information on CaSE can be found on our website: <http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/>