

Press Release: Immediate

13th May 2010

CaSE looks forward to working with Willetts - new Minister for Science & Universities

The Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) welcomes the appointment of David Willetts as Minister of State for Universities and Science in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) with Vince Cable as Secretary of State for BIS.

Dr Hilary Leever, Acting Director of CaSE, said "In his former roles as Shadow Secretary for Education and then Innovation, Universities and Skills, David Willetts always engaged with science issues. He gave a great CaSE Distinguished lecture on Science and Education in 2007. We look forward to working with him in the near future, starting with making a positive and strong case for funding science and engineering prior to the first budget."

"It is vital that the Minister for Science works closely with the Department for Education. As former Shadow of this department, Willetts will be well positioned to do this. He has spoken about many issues affecting science and mathematics education, including the need for good career advice and for all students to be able to take separate biology, chemistry and physics GCSEs. Michael Gove retains his brief as new Minister for Education and he has often spoken about improving science, mathematics and engineering skills."

Science Minister in the Cabinet

David Willetts will be attending Cabinet, like the previous Science Minister, Lord Drayson. The cross-cutting nature of science and engineering ranges from using the skills and knowledge derived from research to help economic growth, to using scientific and engineering advice to inform the policy making in all areas. In addition, many aspects of government affect the success of science and engineering in the UK, from how we educate our children to how we support investment from global industries.

Leever commented "CaSE has argued for the need to have the Minister responsible for science and engineering attending Cabinet meetings. Science and engineering affect or are affected by every department, or both. We are delighted that David Willetts, the new Minister for Science and Universities, will be attending Cabinet. In his 2007 CaSE lecture, he spoke eloquently of the relevance of science to all areas of society, as a basis for rational thought, and of how fundamental it is to our well-being. Willetts is well placed to ensure that everyone in the Cabinet appreciates the importance of science and engineering and how they relate to their departments."

Ends

Notes to editors

1. For further information, please contact Dr Hilary Leever, Acting Director, on 020 7679 4995 or 07905 304 702. Visit the blog for a detailed consideration of what the Conservatives and Liberal Democrat coalition might mean for science and engineering.

<http://blog.sciencecampaign.org.uk/?p=1408>

An article on the Annual Distinguished Lecture that David Willetts gave in September 2007:

<http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/documents/2007/Casenews54p9.pdf>

2. CaSE is a member funded policy advocate for science and engineering in the UK. Find out more at:

<http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/>