

Questions to Scottish Party Leaders - Supplementary Note

Investment

CaSE calls for an upward trajectory for investment in science and engineering over the long-term. Science and engineering is a national success story to which every part of the UK, including Scotland, contributes and benefits. Over the next five years there is enormous opportunity for science and engineering to drive economic prosperity and public wellbeing as a central feature of the Scottish Government's long-term economic plan.

- How would you encourage science and engineering industries to locate and remain in Scotland?
- What plan would you set for investment in research and development over the next five years?

Education & skills

CaSE calls for all children in Scotland have access to a stimulating education in science and mathematics taught by qualified teachers. Further, CaSE calls for science and engineering courses in Scottish universities to be fully and sustainably funded.

- Research shows the strong impact that teachers' knowledge and confidence in science have on students' attitudes towards science and their attainment and progression in it, and yet limited subject knowledge and low confidence in teaching science is common. Scotland has a unique mechanism to help tackle the challenge. Would you include subject-specific professional learning in the Professional Update, and provide continued funding through ENTHUSE awards?
- At present, teaching funding in Scottish Higher Education is 5% below teaching costs on average. This particularly affects the sustainability of science and engineering provision, which costs more to deliver than other subjects. To address this issue, would you review and address funding for the teaching of high-cost subjects to ensure there isn't a financial disincentive for universities delivering these courses?

Science, Engineering & Policy-Making

CaSE calls for all parties to agree that scientific evidence should be gathered, assessed and considered in policy-making decisions. Further, CaSE calls for Government to be transparent about the reasons behind policy decisions, particularly the relevant evidence that informed the decision, but which might also include social or political factors.

- What commitments will your party make to improve the use of scientific expertise to inform policy-making in government? What steps will you take to ensure that relevant evidence is gathered, assessed, and used to inform policy decisions?
- What steps will you take to ensure this process of gathering and assessing evidence related to policy decisions is transparent?
- What steps will you take to ensure that there will be appropriate support for scientific advice for government ministers?
- Will you commit to appointing a Science Minister and Chief Scientific Advisor?
- What steps will you take to ensure that the new Chief Scientific Advisor with the support of the Science Advisory Committee will be consulted regarding policy decisions?