

Questions to Welsh 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 Wales, 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 Welsh Government's long-term economic plan.

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

Education & skills

CaSE calls for all children in Wales have access to a stimulating education in science and mathematics taught by qualified teachers. Further, CaSE calls for science and engineering courses in Welsh universities to be fully and sustainably funded. The reduction in cuts to the HEFCW budget from £42m to £11m in February of this year was welcome. But managing the reduction in the HEFCW budget of £11m still poses considerable challenges. CaSE calls on the Welsh Government to grow the HEFCW budget in real terms as part of a plan for a high-skilled, innovative Wales.

- Given the reduction in HEFCW's budget, how would you protect the Quality Related (QR) budget for university research to allow talented researchers and good ideas will now have a better chance of thriving in Welsh universities?
- University science and engineering courses cost more to deliver than other subjects because of the practical element involved. 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?
- Wales has a Chief Scientific Advisor and an Economy, Science and Transport Minister. Will you commit to retaining the Chief Scientific Advisor position? Will you confirm your support for science to remain in the Ministerial title or, preferably, to be recognised with a stand-alone Science Minister?
- What steps will you take to ensure that the Welsh Chief Scientific Advisor with the support of the Scientific Advisory Council for Wales will be consulted regarding policy decisions?