



12 March 2008

Budget 2008

CaSE would like to see this Budget announcement reaffirm the Government's commitment to making the UK a world leader in science and engineering and push forward in four critical areas.

Research Base

CaSE welcomed the overall CSR07 settlement for science. However, there are serious concerns with the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) budget and delivery plan. CaSE recognises that tough funding decisions have to be made, but the UK's scientific standing is under threat due to an apparent shortfall in funding of £80 million. The funding crisis is threatening the UK's standing as an international partner of choice and leader in physics and astronomy research. If left unresolved there will also be serious knock on effects for the viability of certain university departments and training of highly skilled scientists. CaSE encourages the Treasury to find a solution so that the UK can maintain and ideally improve its scientific standing in this important area of research.

STEM Education

CaSE welcomed the entitlement for all students achieving a certain standard to study three separate science GCSEs starting in September. CaSE has also welcomed the DCFS allocation of £140 million to improve STEM education. However, CaSE believes to make the entitlement a reality that the Government needs to aim to have schools able to provide three separate sciences 'in house' and by trained specialist teachers in the subject. It is a matter of equality to ensure that all students have the opportunity to excel at science and mathematics.

Private Sector Investment

Encouraging private sector research and development needs to be a key aim of Government. CaSE would support a review to look at the UK's comparative strengths and weaknesses in encouraging multinational companies to invest their R&D in the UK. CaSE believes that the UK needs to quickly build upon its current strengths, which is a strong research base and highly skilled graduates. CaSE has heard from multinational companies that invest in the UK who are concerned about Research Councils increasing focus on 'economic impact.' They are concerned because the research base needs to support cutting edge that could lead to new innovations in the future.

Government Department support for Science

CaSE supports the Sainsbury Review recommendation that Government Departments need to increase their investment in science and engineering. This is critical for evidence-based policy making and can also be used to stimulate innovation in certain fields. CaSE would like to see a commitment to maintaining the Science and Innovation Network, which is currently managed by the FCO. It is critical that the UK engages with key partner countries to ensure that we compete and collaborate in science and engineering.