

Government Response to the Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER) of Daresbury

Government welcomes the Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER) of the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (the Review), published today. The Report identifies three main challenges that need to be faced if the full potential of Daresbury is to be realised. This document sets out the Government's response to those challenges.

The Government decided that Daresbury would be one of two Science and Innovation campuses because we believed that there needed to be two complementary locations for 'Big Science' facilities in the UK, and the MIER Report recognises this. To deliver this the Government expects the Research Councils to share its support for Daresbury and the need for a critical mass of science investment. To secure this investment, Daresbury will also need to engage successfully with a wider range of research intensive universities throughout the UK and internationally.

The Government recognises the importance of having strong leadership with specific and dedicated responsibility for the development of the Daresbury campus as a national scientific asset. We want to see a structure that supports stronger leadership, including the appointment of a Scientific Champion for the campus, a Scientific Advisory Board and management solely responsible for the Campus. Part of this will be the creation of a Joint Venture Company with public and private stakeholders dedicated to further developing the Daresbury campus.

Challenge to DIUS

The Government announced at the time of the 2006 Budget its commitment to continued investment in two national science and innovation campuses, at Daresbury and at Harwell. The Government remains committed to developing these Campuses "so as to ensure that the facilities located there are internationally competitive, support world-class science, and maximise opportunities for knowledge transfer."

The recent development of Daresbury has reflected this approach, and has been taken forward on the basis of “Open Innovation”, involving the collaboration, on site, of industry, research facilities and academia in world class science and technology. The Government welcomes the Report’s endorsement of that approach, and remains committed to it.

The Government’s ‘vision’ is for the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus to be:-

- A location for ‘big science’ of international standing.
- A place where new collaborative approaches to research, innovation and learning are developed.
- A natural location for new science, engineering and technology initiatives in the UK and a focus for science-linked projects and innovation activities.
- A prime location for the international R&D sector.
- A scientific and high technology commercial cluster in its own right, significant in regional, national and international economic development and markets.
- A contributor to the development of the UK’s internationally renowned scientific and high-technology skills base.

As recommended by MIER, Government recognises the need for continued scientific investment at Daresbury. This investment needs both to broaden the range of the Campus’s scientific interests and build upon existing expertise. A number of steps have already been taken to implement this, including a number of new large facilities where support from the Large Facilities Capital Fund (LFCF) is already being actively considered, :-

- The Cockcroft Accelerator Science and Technology Research Centre has been established at Daresbury, involving co-located researchers from STFC, Manchester, Liverpool and Lancaster Universities.
- The Government has earmarked £50M from the (LFCF) to develop the Hartree Centre in computational science and engineering, which will involve the Science and Technology Facilities Council, UK Universities, other Government Departments and industry. The Business Plan for Hartree is currently being prepared.
- The Government has also earmarked £15M of LFCF funding to support Daresbury’s key role in a new Detector Systems Technology Gateway centre, which will drive forward collaborative research in next-generation detector systems.
- The Government considers that there are opportunities for Daresbury to develop a strong case for further Gateway Centres building on and broadening Daresbury’s expertise.
- STFC is supporting research at Daresbury using the ALICE prototype facility, particularly for advanced bioscience and medical applications.
- The Government considers that there are further opportunities for Daresbury to develop its expertise in other areas, in particular advanced instrumentation, nuclear physics and nanoscience.

- The Government will continue to encourage the Daresbury Campus leadership to attract further private sector research and development activities to the site.

Challenge of Leadership

The Review challenges Daresbury and its partners to develop a clear overarching governance structure reflecting Daresbury's national status; a clarity of scientific vision with a Scientific Advisory Board and dedicated management as its champion; and realistic financial planning. The current campus partners, the North West Development Agency, the Science and Technology Facilities Council, Halton Borough Council and the Universities of Liverpool, Lancaster and Manchester, through the DSIC Ltd development company, accept this challenge. The partners plan to meet the challenge by:-

- Appointing a Scientific Champion for the Campus, of sufficient status and international standing to continue to develop the science strategy for the site, and who will Chair the Scientific Advisory Board.
- Creating dedicated management of the site, with sole responsibility for Daresbury
- Inviting wider UK and international representation to bring a wider perspective.
- Creating a Public-Private Partnership Joint Venture to implement the vision for the Campus.
- The Joint Venture will be the vehicle for funding and providing the expertise required for infrastructure and buildings requirements on STFC and NWDA owned land.
- Creating a senior-level wider Advisory Group. This Campus Advisory Group will advise the Joint Venture Board, which will have strategic and financial responsibility for development of the Campus.
- Working with the key private sector partners on site to integrate them fully into the Campus Vision.
- Supporting the development of the planned Gateway Centres and working with Government and Research Councils to identify new research opportunities.
- Attracting internationally mobile commercial investment in research and development at the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus.

Challenge to Universities and Research Councils

The Review also presents a challenge to the UK's leading universities. It argues that universities throughout the UK need to be engaged in the research conducted at Daresbury. The report rightly argues that a national campus providing national resources needs national participation. The Government wants to see the Research Councils and the UK's world class, research intensive universities responding to this challenge, building a critical mass of scientific investment and exploiting the opportunities that the Campus offers them. The Daresbury Campus will:-

- Increase the involvement of all relevant Research Councils in developing the Campus, consistent with the Government's restatement of the Haldane Principle
- Daresbury will pursue collaborative research opportunities with a wide range of universities.
- Invite a wider range of Universities to develop relationships with the Campus. This could include jointly funded or university funded research facilities located on the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus
- Encourage greater research collaboration between universities, STFC research programmes, the Cockcroft Accelerator Science Institute, and the planned new national Hartree Computer Science and Detector Systems Technology Gateway Centres.
- Identify and develop relationships with other national and international R&D investors that would be interested in collaborative R&D with universities at Daresbury.

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