

**Verbatim Transcript of Stephen Byers' Announcement at Daresbury Laboratory
2 March 2001**

OK, can I first of all thank you all very much for coming along this morning and I'm particularly pleased to be joined by a .. , a quartet I was going to say..... (laughter) of my parliamentary colleagues who have been working very closely with me, I have to say, on developing our consideration and our response to the work that has been carried out by the North West Science and Daresbury Review Group, which I set up last year. Daresbury has got an international reputation for scientific excellence and that is why I thought it appropriate that I should announce my response to the work of the group actually here at Daresbury itself. And I'm pleased to be able to do so. The group that I set up last year made several recommendations to Government about how the science base in the north west would be underpinned, in a way that would allow the commercial exploitation of ideas and of knowledge. And today I'm making a response on behalf of Government to those particular proposals.

There are a number of recommendations that were made. Some of you will be aware that in relation to one of them, which was the setting up of a university centre of excellence to deal with the work on organic chemicals, that we actually agreed that 2 weeks ago when David Blunkett and myself published the white paper on Opportunity for All, so we almost preannounced that part of the Review Group's recommendations.

In addition, what I am able to announce today is that firstly we agree that there should be established a North West Science Council which will bring together the institutions of higher education, the Regional Development Agency and also industry. The council will be charged with the responsibility of developing a 10-15 year science strategy for the region so that the region has a coherent and comprehensive programme which will promote the scientific excellence that exists in the region.

I am also agreeing to the establishment of a Public Private Partnership company to act as a bridge between Daresbury and industry to enhance the exploitation of the science expertise which actually exists here.

In addition the Report recommended the establishment of a 24 million pound biopharmaceutical manufacturing facility in the north west to be funded by the Government, by the Regional Development Agency and with funds from Europe. I am pleased to announce today that I am able to give the go-ahead to that project and that the Government funding will be made available to underpin that particular project.

There are a number of individual projects that were also considered by the Review Group, some of them not worked up in any great detail but we felt all of them had considerable merit. So what were asking the Science Council to do is to look at each of those individual programmes, the smaller programmes, to see if

progress can be made. And as a first priority were asking the newly established Science Council to consider the Environmental Alliance project which will be lead by Lancaster University.

The main recommendation of course from the Review Group was in relation to the establishment of a Centre for Accelerator Science and Imaging and Medicine, the CASIM project. This is a major project of national significance if not international significance. We have been looking at ways in which we can give the establishment of this centre the go-ahead but also to indicate that we believe the work of that centre should be carried out here at Daresbury. There were two major elements to the recommendation for the establishment of CASIM. One is a 50 million pound project called the Fourth Generation Light Source and the second was the 100 million pounds proton cyclotron which has enormous benefits for health, for industry and for science. Both of those projects we are now giving the approval to, but in addition we are saying in relation to both of them that the detailed work, the feasibility studies, that will need to be carried out to see these major projects come to fruition, should be carried out here at Daresbury. That means that the Project Director for the Fourth Generation Light Source will be located here at the Lab and the North West Regional Research Director of the NHS, who has responsibility for the 100 million pound proton cyclotron project, has said that it is his intention to locate this at Daresbury. I hope when people look at the response that were making today they will recognise that the Government acknowledges the real strengths that exist in science both at this Lab and also throughout the north west as well. I also want to pay a compliment to the individuals who were on the group that we established last year for a very comprehensive piece of work which provides us, I think, not just with a bold and ambitious vision for the future for science in the region but does it in a way which is practical, which has a real programme ahead of us, which I believe that we can deliver together. I also want to thank my colleague Members of Parliament and also the workforce here at Daresbury. We all know the background to this Review Group being set up and it would have been the easiest thing in the world for people to have walked away and said "We've had enough. We don't want to play. We don't think we're going to be given a fair chance therefore we're not going to take part in whatever the Government might propose for the future." That was not the approach of my Parliamentary colleagues or the people here at Daresbury. What they did was basically to rise to the challenge. And I hope that the response that we've been able to make today reflects the strengths of their position and also the arguments that they've been able to put to us. I'm confident that as a result of the announcement that we've been able to make today we'll not just secure the future of the Lab here at Daresbury, what we will be able to do is to underpin the strong scientific base that already exists in the region and do it in a way which allows commercial exploitation of that science base which will regenerate the local economy and bring more jobs to the region as well.

Thankyou very much.

Elaine Seddon
4 March 2001