



Department of Trade and Industry

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**BYERS ANNOUNCES PACKAGE OF MEASURES FOR NORTH WEST
SCIENCE**

Stephen Byers Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, today revealed a major package of initiatives that will provide a real boost for science in the North West, including a new North West Science Council specifically dedicated to the region.

Publishing the Government's response to the North West Science and Daresbury Development Group's report, Stephen Byers announced support for the following initiatives:

- A North West Science Council bringing together higher education institutions, the regional development agency (RDA) and industry. The Council will develop a 10-15 year science strategy for the region to ensure a coherent and active promotion of the North West as a region of scientific excellence and a strategic approach to scientific investment in the area.
- Two projects worth £150 million, part of the proposed **Centre for Accelerator Science and Imaging and Medicine (CASIM)** - subject to approval later this month from the normal scientific review process and the completion of feasibility studies. These projects could lead to advances ranging from the improved detection of cancer to a greater understanding of the origin of elements.
- **The £50 million Fourth Generation Light Source** - the feasibility study would be funded and led by Daresbury which has a clear national lead in accelerator physics.

- **The £100 million Proton Cyclotron** – has potential medical, scientific and industrial benefits. The NHS North West Regional Research Director would take forward feasibility work on this project with the intention of basing it at Daresbury.

- The establishment of a **£24 million Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing Facility** – £3 million Government funding will be provided, in addition to funding from Europe and the RDA. This national facility would carry out the initial manufacture of biopharmaceuticals which could then be used in early trials. It would plug an essential gap that currently exists to speed up the transfer from research to commercial exploitation.

- the establishment of a **Public Private Partnership Company** - to act as a bridge between Daresbury and industry to enhance the exploitation of its scientific expertise for the benefit of the region.

- Other proposals outlined in the report which are at very early stage have been referred to the Science Council. As a first priority the Science Council has been asked to consider the Environmental Alliance project led by Lancaster University.

Other recently announced initiatives have benefited North West science. These include:

- On 20 February 2001, Stephen Byers and David Blunkett announced details of Government investment in British scientific excellence for universities and higher education institutions of which over £60 million went to North West.

- The White Paper on Enterprise Skill and Innovation announced a £4.25 million University Innovation Centre for the North West working on organic chemicals. The new centre involves a number of international companies in the North West, including Astra Zeneca, Avecia, UCB Films and Unilever and is to ensure that university research, particularly at the collaborative Manchester Polymer Centre, is focussed on improving the performance of the region's existing chemicals industry and helping to establish new product lines in existing firms and spawn new start-up companies.

Stephen Byers said:

“Daresbury has an international reputation for its scientific work and is rightly a source of pride both for the region and the country as a whole.

“The North West Science and Daresbury Development Group are to be congratulated in bringing together all the key players in the North West and for their report which clearly demonstrates the importance of integrating science with the region's economy in the long term.

“The creation a new Science Council specifically dedicated to the North West will ensure that there is a truly strategic approach to exploiting to the full the expertise which already exists in the North West and bringing in further science investment in the future. I attach particular importance to engaging the private sector fully in the process.

“Both the Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing Facility and the proposed CASIM project will greatly enhance the North West's science base and bring developments in the treatment of cancer and improve treatments for other diseases.”

“I would like the new Science Council to examine the other proposals highlighted in the group’s report which are currently at an early stage and for which I feel it is important to have a strong business involvement. As a first priority I will ask the Science Council to look at the Environmental Alliance project which I believe fits well with the region’s strategy.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The proposed £3 million to support the development of the Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing Facility would come from the new “harnessing genomics” programme that was announced in the recent White Paper on the Knowledge Economy – “Opportunity for All.”
2. The ownership of Daresbury Laboratories is part of the next stage of quinquennial review of the CCLRC. The Secretary of State will ask the review to take into consideration the Group’s suggestions as part of these deliberations.
3. This announcement follows on from further science investment in the North West announced last October where nine science projects are sharing £26 million of Government funding. Daresbury Laboratory, Liverpool University, Liverpool John Moores University, Manchester University, Salford University and UMIST are all in the lead on projects being funded.

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