

MC2015/27512



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

The Rt Hon George Howarth MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

*Dear George,*

19 NOV 2015

Thank you for your letter of 5 November to George Osborne enclosing correspondence from your constituents, about science funding. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

The Government recognises that science and innovation are core drivers of economic growth. This is why, over the last Parliament, we prioritised science and innovation spending making it a core part of our long-term economic plan.

In addition to maintaining and ring-fencing science resource funding over the last Parliament, this Government has made a long-term commitment to capital infrastructure funding which has risen to £1.1 billion in 2015-16 and will increase in line with inflation out to 2020-21.

However, to concentrate solely on funding inputs would not do justice to our world leading research outputs. The UK's science base leads across a broad range of scientific disciplines because funding decisions are made by academics on grounds of scientific excellence, and rightly so.

As a result, the UK's research punches well above its weight - while the UK represents just 0.9 per cent of global population and 3.2 per cent of R&D expenditure, it accounts for 11.6 per cent of citations, 15.9 per cent of the world's most highly cited articles and has overtaken the US to rank first by field weighted citation impact, an indicator of research quality.

This scientific excellence provides a strong foundation for innovation, attracts scientists from across the world and encourages business investment.

The Science and Innovation Strategy, launched shortly after Autumn Statement 2014, sets out our vision and plan on how to make the UK the best place in the world for science and innovation, and how we can prioritise future resources to ensure we remain at the cutting edge. Central to this strategy is our capital roadmap, outlining our commitment of £5.9 billion to capital infrastructure to support scientific excellence out to 2021.

This long-term commitment to scientific infrastructure provides the scientific community and industry the reassurances they need to invest their time and money into the UK science base.

Future decisions on science funding will be made at the Spending Review and your constituents' views will be considered ahead of this.

Please pass on my thanks to your constituents for making us aware of these concerns.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, sweeping initial 'G' followed by a stylized 'H' and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

GREG HANDS