EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

The Education and Skills Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Education and Skills and its associated public bodies.

Current Membership

Mr Barry Sheerman MP (Labour, Huddersfield) (Chairman)
Mr David Chaytor MP (Labour, Bury North)
Valerie Davey MP (Labour, Bristol West)
Jeff Ennis MP (Labour, Barnsley East & Mexborough)
Paul Holmes MP (Liberal Democrat, Chesterfield)
Mr Robert Jackson MP (Conservative, Wantage)
Ms Meg Munn MP (Labour, Sheffield Heeley)
Mr Kerry Pollard MP (Labour, St Albans)
Jonathan Shaw MP (Labour, Chatham and Aylesford)
Mr Mark Simmonds MP (Conservative, Boston & Skegness)
Mr Andrew Turner MP (Conservative, Isle of Wight)

Powers
The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in S.O. No.152. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk

Publications
The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at: www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/education_and_skills_committee.cfm

Contacts
All correspondence should be addressed to The Clerk of the Education and Skills Committee, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general inquiries is: 020 7219 1376/6181. The Committee’s e-mail address is: edskillscom@parliament.uk
The Education and Skills Committee has agreed to the following Special Report:

LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE FIFTH REPORT FROM THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE, SESSION 2001–02

The Education and Skills Committee reported to the House on *Library Resources for Higher Education* in its Fifth Report of Session 2001–02, published on 9 July 2002 as HC 804. The Government’s response to that Report was received on 6 January 2003. The response is reproduced as the Appendix to this Special Report.
APPENDIX

LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE FIFTH REPORT FROM THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE, SESSION 2001-02

Memorandum from the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Response to the Select Committee's conclusions and recommendations

The Select Committee's recommendations are in bold text.

The Departments' response is in plain text.

1. We are concerned that the previous studies of library provision for higher education did not result in the implementation of a national strategy. We recommend that the British Library, the UK funding bodies and DCMS should now work together to develop a national strategy.

Together with the British Library, DCMS will wish to consider carefully the recommendations of the Research Support Libraries Group (RSLG) on a national strategy for research information resources and their potential cost implications. DfES and those responsible for the funding of the other higher education and research libraries will also wish to consider the RSLG's recommendations and to discuss with DCMS and the British Library how they should be taken forward. We look forward to receiving the recommendations of the RSLG.

2. We recognise that over fifty per cent of the British Library's activities are devoted to supporting higher education research. We are concerned that the Department for Education and Skills cannot support the activities of the British Library. Extra resources would have a disproportionately positive effect within the higher education establishment. We recommend that the Department for Education and Skills should work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to ensure that research resources for higher education institutions are sufficiently funded.

DCMS has a number of sponsored bodies to which other public bodies besides DCMS contribute funding. DCMS and DfES will explore with the Higher Education Funding Council whether there is merit in the arrangement the committee suggests.

3. We believe that the digitisation of resources at the British Library is key to maintaining the Library's world class position and will help to widen access to valuable resources. We recommend that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport should give its support to the Library's plans for digitisation and that this priority should be reflected in the allocation of funding following the 2002 spending review.

DCMS recognises the importance of digitisation and is working with the British Library towards securing digital legal deposit. The key priority in SR2002 has been to obtain the additional capital funding needed to meet the Library's urgent requirement for additional storage as the existing storage is expected to be full by 2005/06. However, DCMS, with the
support of DfES has also submitted an Invest to Save bid with a view to obtaining the extra funding needed to support the Library's digitisation plans. There is no guarantee that the bid will be successful in the face of the very considerable competition for these funds.

4. We suggest that the proposed British Library electronic research library would have sufficient status to offer a real alternative to scientists wishing to publish their research. We look to the British Library to explore ways in which the proposed electronic research library could be developed.

DCMS fully supports the British Library's efforts to expand and make available its digital collection to the widest possible range of users and to encourage digital deposit in place of paper, wherever possible. Real progress will depend on the achievement of digital legal deposit.