



House of Commons  
Science and Technology  
Committee

---

**The Medical Research  
Council's Review of the  
Future of the National  
Institute for Medical  
Research: Responses to  
the Committee's  
Fourth Report of  
Session 2004–05**

---

**Seventh Special Report of Session 2004–05**

*Ordered by The House of Commons  
to be printed 16 March 2005*

**HC 454**  
Published on 22 March 2005  
by authority of the House of Commons  
London: The Stationery Office Limited  
£0.00

## The Science and Technology Committee

The Science and Technology Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Office of Science and Technology and its associated public bodies.

### Current membership

Dr Ian Gibson MP (*Labour, Norwich North*) (Chairman)  
Paul Farrelly MP (*Labour, Newcastle-under-Lyme*)  
Dr Evan Harris MP (*Liberal Democrat, Oxford West & Abingdon*)  
Kate Hoey MP (*Labour, Vauxhall*)  
Dr Brian Iddon MP (*Labour, Bolton South East*)  
Mr Robert Key MP (*Conservative, Salisbury*)  
Mr Tony McWalter MP (*Labour, Hemel Hempstead*)  
Dr Andrew Murrison MP (*Conservative, Westbury*)  
Geraldine Smith MP (*Labour, Morecambe and Lunesdale*)  
Bob Spink MP (*Conservative, Castle Point*)  
Dr Desmond Turner MP (*Labour, Brighton Kemptown*)

### 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 SO No.152. These are available on the Internet via [www.parliament.uk](http://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/s&tcom](http://www.parliament.uk/s&tcom)  
A list of Reports from the Committee in the present Parliament is included at the back of this volume.

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are: Chris Shaw (Clerk); Emily Commander (Second Clerk); Alun Roberts (Committee Specialist); Hayaatun Sillem (Committee Specialist); Ana Ferreira (Committee Assistant); Robert Long (Senior Office Clerk); and Christine McGrane (Committee Secretary).

### Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Science and Technology Committee, Committee Office, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general inquiries is: 020 7219 2793; the Committee's e-mail address is: [scitechcom@parliament.uk](mailto:scitechcom@parliament.uk)

# Seventh Special Report

---

On 8 February 2005 the Science and Technology Committee published its Fourth Report of Session 2004–05, *The Medical Research Council's Review of the Future of the National Institute for Medical Research* as HC 6-I. On 14 March 2005 the Committee received a memorandum from the Government which contained a response to the Report. The memorandum is published without comment as an appendix to this Report.

The Committee also received a response from the Medical Research Council which is also published without comment as an appendix to this Report.

## Appendix 1

---

### Government Response

The Government welcomes the Committee's report on The Medical Research Council (MRC)'s Review of the Future of the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR). The Committee's scrutiny of the way the MRC handled the review of the future of NIMR provides a valuable assessment of this process.

We welcome the positive comments that were made, for example that the Task Force's decision-making process was rational and coherent, that they gave due consideration to the benefits of NIMR remaining at Mill Hill and that they were open and transparent.

The Government endorses the MRC response to this report which is attached at annex 1 (printed as appendix 2).

On the issue of funding the OST will be updating the Large Facilities Roadmap in the summer. It will be for the MRC to make the case for inclusion of NIMR in the Road Map, and for any funding from the Large Facilities Capital Fund. Demand for the Large Facilities Capital Fund always exceeds available funds and priorities need to be agreed across all areas of the science base. The prioritization process for funds will be taking place in the latter part of this year.

*March 2005*

## Appendix 2

---

### Response from the Medical Research Council

MRC published a statement on its website on 7 February 2005 welcoming publication of the Committee's report.

For the Parliamentary record, that response is now repeated below and has been updated to take account of more recent developments in determining the future of the Institute.

MRC welcomes the Committee's recognition of the MRC's responsibility to carry out periodic reviews of its major institutes. The review of the future of NIMR has been unusually complex. As the early sections of the Committee's report imply, the complexities and difficulties in winning local management's co-operation with the review predate the Forward Investment Strategy (FIS). It should be noted for the record that MRC has never announced plans to 'close' or to 'break up' NIMR as suggested in the report.

MRC further welcomes the Committee's view that the review was fair and that 'any shortcomings were not so serious as to invalidate the outcome'. MRC will bear in mind the Committee's comments on the process to ensure that, as far as possible future strategic reviews are informed by them.

The Committee's report was published shortly before a meeting of the Council on 10 February 2005 when further consideration was given to the merits of proposals from two potential partners in developing the full business and scientific case for the renewal of NIMR. The decision that University College London (UCL) should be the preferred partner was announced by MRC and UCL on 11 February.

As the Committee observed, it is important to ensure that a Central London option for NIMR exceeds the current quality of the research facilities and environment at Mill Hill. MRC and UCL are now working actively to this end developing a full business and scientific case for the renewed NIMR at UCL. Scientific staff at Mill Hill who are likely to have a long-term commitment to the renewed institute are being encouraged to participate in this process. Future progress will continue to be reported on the MRC website. The next announcement is expected to be in May 2005 when the MRC Council and UCL's Council review the full business and scientific case.

The Committee raised the important issue of funding for the project. Discussions on funding will form part of the full business case development. While the exact details of funding have yet to be agreed it is likely that this will include contributions from UCL and MRC. In addition MRC will be making an application to OST for funding through the Large Facilities Capital Fund.

*March 2005*

## Reports from the Science and Technology Committee since 2001

### Session 2004-05

First Report	The Work of the Economic and Social Research Council ( <i>Reply HC 401</i> )	HC 13
Second Report	Annual Report 2004	HC 199
Third Report	Office of Science and Technology: Scrutiny Report 2004 ( <i>Reply HC 453</i> )	HC 8
Fourth Report	The Medical Research Council's Review of the Future of the National Institute for Medical Research ( <i>Reply HC 454</i> )	HC 6

### Session 2003-04

First Report	Annual Report 2003	HC 169
Second Report	Chief Executive of the Medical Research Council: Introductory Hearing ( <i>Reply HC 629</i> )	HC 55
Third Report	The Work of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council ( <i>Reply HC 526</i> )	HC 6
Fourth Report	Office of Science and Technology: Scrutiny Report 2003 ( <i>Reply HC 588</i> )	HC 316
Fifth Report	<i>Too Little too late?</i> Government Investment in Nanotechnology ( <i>Reply HC 650</i> )	HC 56
Sixth Report	Within REACH: the EU's new chemicals strategy ( <i>Reply HC 895</i> )	HC 172
Seventh Report	Director General for Higher Education: Introductory Hearing ( <i>Reply HC 1015</i> )	HC 461
Eighth Report	The Work of the Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils ( <i>Reply HC 1199</i> )	HC 462
Ninth Report	Director General of the Research Councils: Introductory Hearing ( <i>Reply HC 1059</i> )	HC 577
Tenth Report	Scientific Publications: Free for all? ( <i>Reply HC 1200</i> )	HC 399
Eleventh Report	Research Assessment Exercise: a re-assessment ( <i>Reply HC 34, 2004-05</i> )	HC 586
Twelfth Report	Government support for Beagle 2 ( <i>Reply HC 301, 2004-05</i> )	HC 711
Thirteenth Report	The Use of Science in UK International Development Policy ( <i>Reply HC 235, 2004-05</i> )	HC 133
Fourteenth Report	Responses to the Committee's Tenth Report, Session 2003-04, Scientific Publications: Free for all? ( <i>Reply HC 249, 2004-05</i> )	HC 1200

### Session 2002-03

First Report	The Work of the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council ( <i>Reply HC 507</i> )	HC 161
Second Report	Annual Report 2002	HC 260

Third Report	The Work of the Medical Research Council ( <i>Reply Cm 5834</i> )	HC 132
Fourth Report	Towards a Non-Carbon Fuel Economy: Research, Development and Demonstration ( <i>Reply HC 745</i> )	HC 55
Fifth Report	The Work of the Natural Environment Research Council ( <i>Reply HC 1161</i> )	HC 674
Sixth Report	UK Science and Europe: Value for Money? ( <i>Reply HC 1162</i> )	HC 386
Seventh Report	Light Pollution and Astronomy ( <i>Reply HC 127, 2003-04</i> )	HC 747
Eighth Report	The Scientific Response to Terrorism ( <i>Reply Cm 6108</i> )	HC 415
Ninth Report	The Work of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. ( <i>Reply HC 169, 2003-04</i> )	HC 936

### Session 2001-02

First Report	Cancer Research – A Follow-Up ( <i>Reply Cm 5532</i> )	HC 444
Second Report	The Research Assessment Exercise ( <i>Reply HC 995</i> )	HC 507
Third Report	Science Education from 14 to 19 ( <i>Reply HC 1204</i> )	HC 508
Fourth Report	Developments in Human Genetics and Embryology ( <i>Reply Cm 5693</i> )	HC 791
Fifth Report	Government Funding of the Scientific Learned Societies ( <i>Reply HC 53</i> )	HC 774
Sixth Report	National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts: A Follow-Up ( <i>Reply HC 276</i> )	HC 1064
Seventh Report	The Office of Science and Technology: Scrutiny Report 2002 ( <i>Reply HC 293</i> )	HC 860
Eighth Report	Short-Term Research Contracts in Science and Engineering ( <i>Reply HC 442</i> )	HC 1046