Evidence Session follow-up response

Thank you for your letter of 20 December. Below is my response to the areas where you have asked for further information and greater clarification:

1. **You stated that you were looking into research and development budgets, specifically “what has happened to the budgets, how the budgets are being used, where we think there may be gaps and how the public sector research establishments may fit into the overall picture” (Q68 & Q73). Would you be willing to share this information with us when that work is complete?**

   Our work is still under way so there is no final product to share at this point. I would be very happy to brief the Committee once work is complete.

2. **You mentioned that, as of January, a smaller group of CSAs will meet with a much more directed management and leadership agenda, in order to work together to push science across government (Q57). Could you please clarify:**

   a. **Exactly who is involved in this group;**
   
   b. **Whether the group has been informally set-up; and**
   
   c. **Whether the new arrangements have been set out with terms of reference? If so, are you able to share thee with us?**

   The CSA Network Steering Committee group consists of myself and a subset of departmental Chief Scientific Advisers. Membership will rotate annually but in the
first instance the other members are: Stephen Belcher (Chief Scientist, Met Office), Ian Boyd (CSA, Defra), Guy Poppy (CSA, Food Standards Agency) Charlotte Watts (CSA, DfID) and Chris Whitty (CSA, DHSC). The group met for the first time on 8 January 2019. Its terms of reference are being finalised and I will forward these shortly when they are complete.

3. You stated that GO-Science has undertaken considerable ARI analysis across departments (Q86). Would you be willing to share this analysis with the Committee?

Please find attached our analysis of the ARI documents that have been published, highlighting many areas of cross cutting interest, including Behavioural Science, data and digital, health, international best practice, people and population, new technologies and smart cities, security and the environment.

4. You stated that the Council for Science and Technology has been doing some work looking at the route to 2.4% research and development spending (Q8). Would you be willing to share some more details of what the Council for Science and Technology has been doing and whether it plans to publish advice on this area?

The Council for Science and Technology has been working closely with BEIS in the development of its 2.4% roadmap and has provided direct feedback at different stages. The Council will continue to engage with BEIS as the roadmap develops and will provide support through specific policy recommendations, including comments on current and potential issues, recommendations on possible approaches, and areas for investigation. I anticipate that a letter with the Council’s advice on the strategic approach towards achieving the target of 2.4% of GDP in R&D will be sent to the Prime Minister early this year. The advice will be published on gov.uk following our normal procedure.

5. You stated that a priority of yours was to pull together a security strategy across Government, and within that you are “trying to look at where money should be spent” (Q74). At Q83 you explained that you had not been involved with Galileo to date as “many of the issues around Galileo are security MOD issues, not actually the science of the programme itself.” The MoD CSA has not had any meetings with the Secretary of State for Defence. Does this cause you concern? While noting your point that the issues involved may not be scientific in nature, could you nonetheless confirm whether the MoD CSA will be appropriately involved?

The Interim CSA, Dr Simon Cholerton, has a senior leadership position in the MoD. He meets regularly with the Permanent Secretary, Service Chiefs and the responsible Minister (the Minister for Defence Procurement) and provides frequent advice to the Secretary of State on Science and Technology issues. He is a member of the Department’s Executive Committee and Strategy Development Group, both co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary and Chief of the Defence Service. He is a member of the Department’s main Investment, Military Requirements and Transformation Boards.
Dr Cholerton has been closely engaged in senior MoD and cross-government discussions around its space strategy including discussions on the UK’s involvement in the Galileo programme. The UK Space Agency is the lead authority for the UK Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) Programme to develop a national alternative to Galileo. This work is currently in the Engineering, Design and Development Phase in which MoD is actively engaged. I am confident that MoD is supporting the UK Space Agency with appropriate technical and engineering advice to the GNSS Programme, including on security issues. I hope that a new permanent CSA to MoD will be approved shortly.

6. You stated that you wanted to be more rigorous about following up on the GO-Science annual report (Q24). Could you please clarify exactly how you will evaluate the work of GO-Science, and how you will measure the influence that GO-Science has on the rest of Whitehall?

The annual report is an opportunity to showcase our achievements and impact across government over the past year. In the short term, my aim is to ensure that what we are doing is relevant, based in scientific excellence, and delivered on time and in the right format. We provide advice on issues that are pressing today whilst also anticipating needs in the future; our work is grounded in scientific excellence, utilising the advice of the world’s leading scientists, from across a diverse range of settings; and our advice is delivered in the right way and at the right time. We are therefore putting more effort into scoping our work in order to ensure these three principles of relevance, scientific excellence and delivery are in place and we can evaluate our work.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Patrick Vallance
GOVERNMENT CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISER