

The Government has listened; the HoC Science and Technology Committee is re-established and meets for the first time in October. It will have the same Chairman and membership as the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee had, which it replaces, although the Whips will need to do a bit of work to fill the vacancies that exist.

On 23 September I attended the joint 10th Anniversary Celebration of the University of Manchester Incubator Company (UMIC) and 5th Anniversary Celebration of the University of Manchester's Intellectual Property Commercialisation Company (UMIP). However their success is measured this 'portfolio of incubators, based around the Manchester city region, catering for companies in the medical/life science and high technology sectors' has been remarkably successful. Congratulations to all those pioneers who were brave enough to launch the first Manchester bioincubator in 1999, one of the first of its kind.

The requirement for Full Economic Costs (FEC) in research grants in the UK appears to be shifting some industrial research money away from British universities to universities abroad. In any case, what are our Vice-Chancellors doing with this money currently? When the call comes, will they be able to produce it to keep their laboratories and workshops at the cutting edge, which was the reason for requiring FEC in the first place?

As we enter the final straight leading to the General Election the dominant discussion appears to be how each party will address the need for cuts to pay for the debts caused by the 'credit crunch'. Will the science budget remain ring fenced, even if Labour can earn a fourth term? In talks with academics and other professionals in the education and health sectors I get the impression that they are looking for cuts now. For example, the University and College Union tell me that they are engaging in some vigorous discussions with some of our Vice-Chancellors, who are proposing significant 'restructuring' in their universities.

According to the Trans Atlantic Think Tank for Toxicology at John Hopkins University in Baltimore the cost of REACH compliance may be six times previous estimates and use twenty times more animals. It comes as no surprise therefore that animal rights activism is on the rise again. Novartis employees have been targeted recently in France and Switzerland, with renewed demands that the company severs its links with Huntingdon Life Science.



Dr Brian Iddon MP
Chairman,
Editorial Board
Science in Parliament

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The Journal of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee.

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1. to inform the scientific and industrial communities of activities within Parliament of a scientific nature and of the progress of relevant legislation;
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