

Today Programme - Minister responds to STFC budget concerns

Tue, 11 December 07 | DeHavilland Report - TV and Radio

Summary

Science Minister Ian Pearson has said he will wait for the results of a review before deciding what action to take over the reported £80 million funding shortfall being faced by the Science and Technology Facilities Council, which is responsible for the funding of major research projects as well as physics teaching departments.

Mr Pearson, speaking on BBC Radio 4's 'Today' programme, said that he was "concerned" about the shortfall.

"We have concerns about the STFC's budgetary proposals, we've been discussing that with them over the last few days and weeks and there clearly are problems," he said.

"Although we don't get interfering with the detail because we respect what's called the Haldane principle which has been in place for many years.

"And I think in the light of this and the delivery plans that are going to be outlined by all the research councils today, I've asked Ian Diamond, chair of RCUK, to review support for physics, which is a key part of our agenda on science, technology and engineering."

When pressed if the Government would help the STFC with its shortfall, Mr Pearson replied: "We will have to see what the review says but certainly the health of the different disciplines, physics in particular, is something of concern to us."

He added: "Nobody wants to see physics hit hard."