

14 February 2008

## **Science stronger**

The government's commitment to science ("**Death of big physics**", Observations, 4 February) is demonstrated by the fact that the UK's science budget will increase to £4bn by 2011. In the same period the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) will receive a 13.6 per cent increase, enabling more investment in many prestigious projects such as the Cern laboratory in Geneva. The STFC has said funding for physics exploitation grants will remain broadly level in the next financial year and it anticipates that the UK will remain at the forefront of global research. Given the government's policy is that research councils should meet a greater share of university research costs, support for astronomy exploitation and particle physics will have risen by about 70 and 40 per cent respectively between 2006 and 2009. In addition, the review of the health of physics by Professor Wakeham of Southampton University, due later in 2008, will enable us to assess how we might best build on the strengthening of physics research in the UK in recent years.

*Ian Pearson*

*Minister for science and innovation*

*London SW1*