

# IOB welcomes return of select committee

In the recent Government reshuffle, a new Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) was created which will deal with science. Previously, the science budget and Science Minister were within the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) with scrutiny being provided by the Commons Select Committee on Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills. A new select committee is now being formed to oversee the activities of the new Department.

The Institute of Biology and others share the opinion that the remit of BIS is so broad that a single select committee would be unable to give sufficient attention to science as well as to other aspects of business and innovation. For many years the Science and Technology Select Committee provided excellent cross-departmental review of science matters until it was disbanded on the creation of DIUS.

The IoB, the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Institute of Physics, the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering wrote jointly to the Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP, Leader of the House of Commons, to urge the re-creation of a similar committee now to oversee science, engineering and technology. The outgoing IUSS committee and Lord Drayson, Minister for Science broadly shared this view.

We are delighted that the Government has listened and welcome the announcement of the return of the Science and Technology Select Committee under the Chairmanship of Phil Willis MP, with membership drawn from the current IUSS Committee. We are also gratified that our intervention was mentioned in Parliament as part of the announcement.

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## Is confusion causing food waste?

The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has suggested that the use of both 'Best by' and 'Use by' labelling is confusing and may be contributing to unnecessary food waste. He has suggested that only 'Use by' be retained as an indication of safety.

Last year the IoB highlighted a possible role for the Food Standards Agency and others in combating food waste by separating the concepts of quality and safety in labelling. This was put forward in our recommendations to the review by the Government Office for Science of the

use of science in the FSA. The response is available on our website within the Science Policy section.

The policy team are always interested to hear the views of members on these and other issues.

