

Prime Minister sets out plans to realise and maximise the opportunities of scientific and technological breakthroughs

- New council to set strategy on how science and technology will tackle great societal challenges and transform lives
- Plans set to build on the success of the best UK science throughout the pandemic and beyond to cement UK's position as a science superpower

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has unveiled plans today (Monday 21 June) to ensure the UK's world-leading science and ideas turn into solutions for public good, as part of ambitions to become a global science superpower.

A new National Science and Technology Council will be established and chaired by the Prime Minister. It will provide strategic direction on the use of science and technology as the tools to tackle great societal challenges, level up across the country and boost prosperity around the world.

The Prime Minister has also asked Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance to head up a new Office for Science and Technology Strategy, based in the Cabinet Office, and take up the role of the new National Technology Adviser, in addition to his current role as the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser and head of the Government Office for Science.

The Office will support the ministerial council and the National Technology Adviser to drive forward the strategy of Whitehall's science and technology priorities from the centre. It will strengthen the government's insight into cutting-edge research and technologies and work across government to put science and technology at the centre of policy and public services. The Office will also identify what is needed to secure and protect the capability in science and technology required in the UK to deliver the government's ambitions.

The UK's successful vaccine and therapeutics programmes has proven how science can deliver real, meaningful benefit to the British people and transform lives around the world, helping to protect people from coronavirus and enable societies to reopen again.

The Prime Minister is tasking the whole of government, working with the new council and office, to take the success of the UK's approach to vaccines and apply it to other priorities – setting bold visions, acting with speed, and taking risks, which can bring high rewards and benefits to the UK, including in developing technology to reach net zero, curing cancer and not only treating it, and keeping our citizens safe at home and abroad.

One of the first tasks of the Office for Science and Technology Strategy will

be to review the technology bets the UK should back and prioritise for strategic advantage.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

From discovery to delivery, our vaccination programme has proven what the UK can achieve at scale and at speed.

With the right direction, pace and backing, we can breathe life into many more scientific and technological breakthroughs that transform the lives of people across the UK and the world.

That's why I'm establishing a new ministerial council and office at the centre of government, so we can realise the limitless possibilities that research and technology has to offer and cement the UK's place as a global science superpower.

Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance said:

The new Office for Science and Technology Strategy will put science and technology right at the heart of policy-making and strengthen the way we work across government to reinforce the position of the UK as a science superpower. I look forward to working with the National Science and Technology Council to help identify cutting-edge research and technologies that will deliver strategic advantage for the UK.

The government is currently investing £14.9 billion in R&D in 2021-22, meaning government R&D spending is now at its highest level in real terms for four decades.