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## **Universities of Surrey and Strathclyde selected as strategic partners in the future operation of the National Physical Laboratory**

The Universities of Strathclyde and Surrey have been identified as preferred partners to enter into a new strategic partnership with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the world-renowned National Physical Laboratory (NPL), a global centre of excellence in measurement and materials science. This new partnership will help to provide future leadership of NPL.

The new alliance will see the two universities and NPL collaborate to bring together their track record of working with business and industry and their complementary academic strengths.

Working with BIS and NPL the successful bid will help to shape the scientific priorities of the UK. The establishment of a Graduate Institute, which will train up to 300 high-calibre PhD students, will provide a pipeline of skilled researchers. Working with the staff at NPL, the potential of the Laboratory will be grown through the creation of a series of regional hubs which will reflect local expertise and business needs.

David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, said: "Following a formal competitive process, I have decided that the Universities of Surrey and Strathclyde will become preferred partners and will now work with BIS and NPL to develop a strategic partnership to lead NPL into the next exciting phase in its future.

"The partners' proposal provides the best opportunity to meet the aims set at the beginning of this process. The partnership will help to boost NPL's and the partners' scientific excellence, will strengthen engagement with business, and will make more of the facilities and the site. An important focus will be to develop activity to support postgraduate research and training at Teddington and across the UK."

The partnership will enable all parties to strengthen both the excellence of their science and their engagement with business. The Universities of Strathclyde and Surrey are leading international higher education institutions whose work has an impact on society and the global economy through pioneering research in priority sectors. They share an enterprising spirit and a strong track record of working with business and industry, achieved by removing barriers between scientific discoveries and commercial applications. Both are well-positioned to have a major positive impact on the future success and growth of NPL.

The alliance will work in partnership with the University of Cambridge, the University of Huddersfield and LGC on a range of complementary activities within NPL. The joint bid was also supported by a large group of major industrial organisations.

Strathclyde's Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Jim McDonald, said: "NPL is a world-class centre of excellence in developing and applying measurement standards and its work with business and industry is well-established. As a leading international technological university, Strathclyde is perfectly positioned to help grow both the scientific and commercial engagement activity of this globally recognised Institute.

"Together, we will invest our joint expertise to significantly increase engagement across UK business and industry, raise our international research profile and deepen collaboration with the UK science base. The alliance underlines our commitment to the development of 'gold standard' postgraduate training which will develop the metrology experts of tomorrow."

Professor Sir Christopher Snowden, Vice-Chancellor for the University of Surrey, added: "This strategic partnership will draw on the partners' combined expertise to deliver the Minister's vision for NPL. NPL's focus on scientific excellence and industrial impact perfectly complements Surrey's world-class research in the key areas of electronics, communications, physics, health, medicine, and space science. By expanding the partnership's research community and capabilities we are confident that the effects will not only be felt by industry across the UK, but also internationally."

A number of opportunities have been identified to build on the strengths of the partners to allow NPL to make a step change in capability, influence and impact. These include:

- Joint working in areas of strength such as space, healthcare and industrial applications of metrology.
- Developing a presence for NPL, in partnership with other organisations, across the UK through regional hubs; bringing expertise and services closer to user communities who can benefit.
- Creating a vibrant research community at the Teddington site including a new Post Graduate Institute training of up to 300 high-calibre PhD students, which will provide a pipeline of skilled researchers.

In the new arrangement, Government will own NPL's operating company with the expectation that Vice-Chancellors of the two universities will join the NPL Board alongside BIS. NPL will retain its role, status and international influence as a world leading National Measurement Institute meeting the UK's needs.

Brian Bowsher, Director of NPL, said "We are pleased that the Minister has agreed that NPL should be a Government owned company and are delighted to be working with the Universities of Strathclyde and Surrey. We already have strong links with both universities and see exciting opportunities to broaden NPL's science, develop our regional footprint, and continue the growth and impact of our work for UK industry. Scientific research is often limited by what can practically be measured. NPL's research pushes this boundary and works with industry to apply this knowledge in practice – making a real difference to people's lives and livelihoods. The partnership has identified a number of ambitious and exciting opportunities to work together to bring about real change in capability, influence and impact for the UK."

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## Notes

David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, has set out his vision for NPL in statement in November 2012, as a partnership with academia and applied research organisations. These are to:

- Bring greater expertise and intellectual flexibility to strengthen the Laboratory's science;
- Make better use of the existing facilities by strengthening the Laboratory's links with its academic partners, through new and existing collaborations with academia and industry;
- Encourage greater interaction with business, driven by closer integration of existing innovation infrastructure and commercial activity;
- Make better use of the site at Teddington by granting partners access to spare capacity; and
- Allow for the formation of a dedicated applied science postgraduate institute.

### **About the University of Strathclyde**

Established more than 200 years ago 'for the good of mankind', the University of Strathclyde has always had a global outlook. Today, Strathclyde is a leading international technological university which is recognised for strong research links with business and industry, commitment to enterprise and skills development, and knowledge sharing with the private and public sectors. The University was named UK University of the Year in the 2012 Times Higher Education (THE) Awards. In the 2013 THE Awards, the University was named Entrepreneurial University of the Year. Based in the heart of Glasgow, Strathclyde has a vibrant, international community including 22,000 students and more than 3,000 staff from 100 countries. Its academics are committed to working with partners to tackle major research challenges in areas including health, energy, manufacturing and future cities, while developing the highly-skilled graduates needed by the professions. [www.strath.ac.uk](http://www.strath.ac.uk)

### **About the University of Surrey**

The University of Surrey is one of the UK's leading professional, scientific and technological universities with a world class research profile and a reputation for excellence in teaching and research. Ground-breaking research at the University is bringing direct benefit to all spheres of life – helping industry to maintain its competitive edge and creating improvements in the areas of health, medicine, space science, the environment, communications, defence and social policy. Programmes in science and technology have gained widespread recognition and it also boasts flourishing programmes in dance and music, social sciences, management and languages and law. In addition to the campus on 150 hectares just outside Guildford, Surrey, the University also owns and runs the Surrey Research Park, which provides facilities for 110 companies employing 2,750 staff. The University of Surrey was recently ranked 6th in The Guardian league table of UK universities for 2015. [www.surrey.ac.uk](http://www.surrey.ac.uk)

### **About the National Physical Laboratory**

The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) is the UK's National Measurement Institute and one of the UK's leading science facilities and research centres. It is a world-leading centre of excellence in developing and applying the most accurate standards, science and technology available.

NPL occupies a unique position as the UK's National Measurement Institute and sits at the intersection between scientific discovery and real world application. Its expertise and original research have

underpinned quality of life, innovation and competitiveness for UK citizens and business for more than a century.

Based in Teddington, Middlesex, it is a global centre of excellence in measurement and materials science. Established in 1900, has been home to a number of world-leading figures from science and engineering, including Alan Turing, recognised as the father of modern computing; Robert Watson-Watt, the inventor of radar; Donald Davies, who developed packet-switching, the basis of modern computer communications and Ray Essen who developed the world's first atomic clock. NPL continues this great tradition and is currently home to the world's most accurate clock (NPL-CsF-2), which is accurate to one second in 158 million years; and is leading thinking in areas such as graphene and carbon metrology. [www.npl.co.uk](http://www.npl.co.uk)

### **About the University of Cambridge**

The mission of the University of Cambridge is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence. To date, 90 affiliates of the University have won the Nobel Prize. Founded in 1209, the University comprises 31 autonomous Colleges, which admit undergraduates and provide small-group tuition, and 150 departments, faculties and institutions. The University sits at the heart of one of the world's largest technology clusters. The 'Cambridge Phenomenon' has created 1,500 hi-tech companies, 12 of them valued at over US\$1 billion and two at over US\$10 billion. Cambridge promotes the interface between academia and business, and has a global reputation for innovation. [www.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cam.ac.uk)

### **About the University of Huddersfield**

The University of Huddersfield, which has a long standing relationship with NPL, is a core partner in the bidding group led by the Universities of Strathclyde and Surrey. Huddersfield University will be the base for an NPL regional hub, housed in purpose-built premises that will provide doctoral training plus research in manufacturing metrology and direct engagement with industrial partners. Metrology is an established strength at the University of Huddersfield, which has a number of internationally leading scientists in the field. It is also home to the EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Advanced Metrology. NPL has a specially-equipped laboratory in the University's **3M Buckley Innovation Centre**, having forged a partnership with Huddersfield in 2009. [www.hud.ac.uk](http://www.hud.ac.uk)

### **About LGC**

LGC is an international life sciences measurement and testing company, which builds upon leading positions in sustainably growing markets. LGC provides reference materials, proficiency testing, genomics and analytical products and services which underpin the safety, health and security of the public to customers in the Pharmaceutical, Agricultural Bioscience, Food and Environment, Government and Academia, Security and Sports markets.

With a history dating back to 1842, LGC has been home to the UK Government Chemist for more than 100 years. It is the designated UK National Measurement Institute for Chemical and Bioanalytical measurement, providing metrology research, calibration and testing. LGC was privatised in 1996 and is now majority-owned by funds managed by Bridgepoint.

[www.lgcgroup.com](http://www.lgcgroup.com)

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