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**An opportunity “to shape a future global collaboration”**

HiPER welcomes the [vision](#) released today by the UK Research Councils, based on the recommendations of an international expert group. This calls for an integrated UK approach to fusion and continued long-term funding for fusion research.

The expert group, chaired by Professor Keith Burnett, was convened by the Research Councils UK Energy Programme, the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

Responding to the vision, STFC and EPSRC said they had agreed a revised strategy and would support fusion research as a long term endeavour in which ‘the UK is making an internationally leading research contribution and demonstrating leadership to realise the goal of fusion energy’.

The “20-year Vision” document confirms that, however great the challenge, the global potential of fusion energy fully justifies pursuing this research in the UK. Fusion is recognised as a potential source of abundant, zero-emission and low-waste energy, and a sustainable long-term solution to the world’s energy needs, which will complement other low carbon energy solutions.

Laser fusion research in the UK is centred on the HiPER (High Power laser Energy Research) Project, a UK-led European consortium from ten countries, whose work is strongly tied to the results of experiments at the US Department of Energy’s \$3.5bn National Ignition Facility (NIF), which is on track for the all-important first “ignition” of fusion by high-powered lasers between late 2010 and 2012.

“This recognises ignition of laser fusion as a seminal moment in the development of fusion energy. It recommends that the UK should use its central role in the European HiPER Project to lead development of a global collaboration. Laser fusion has long been heralded as a key solution to the energy challenge and is now at a critical point. This report marks a profound leap forward.” said project leader Professor Mike Dunne, who will speak at the annual conference of the AAAS to advocate a truly international approach to early achievement of laser fusion.

“Decisions are now needed to see this research through to delivery,” said Professor Dunne, “As a world leader in this field, the UK is in a prime position to go forward with our European and international partners and build laser fusion into a sustainable energy reality. “