



PLEASED: Universities and science minister David Willetts, seen here at last month's topping out of the LMB in Cambridge

'Flagship institution for science' looks to future

SCIENTISTS were celebrating in Cambridge last night after vital Government funding was spared the chop – and a city laboratory received a cash windfall.

Despite warnings from Business Secretary Vince Cable that funding could be cut in areas which were “neither commercially useful nor theoretically outstanding”, yesterday's Comprehensive Spending Review revealed that the £4.6 billion science budget will stay the same for the next four years.

The Medical Research Council's (MRC) Laboratory of Molecular Biology (LMB) in Cambridge received even better news, when George Osborne announced it was to receive a share of £220 million in funding.

Hugh Pelham, laboratory director, said: “We welcome the Government's commitment to funding infrastructure for the MRC LMB.

■ **STEPHEN EXLEY**
Education correspondent

“MRC scientists have made countless discoveries that have delivered tangible health benefits for millions of people in the UK and worldwide.

“This investment will ensure that LMB remains a unique centre of innovation and a flagship institute for science in Cambridge and the UK.

“Our life-saving scientific findings, including the sequencing of DNA and the development of humanised monoclonal antibodies, have generated more than £300 million of commercial income and will continue to support the UK's economic recovery.”

Cambridge MP Julian Huppert welcomed the boost for the LMB as a “good part of the whole settlement”.

The Clare College fellow and research biochemist had been campaigning against cuts in recent weeks under the Science is Vital and Cam-

paign for Science and Engineering banners, with members lobbying MPs to protect the UK's reputation in research.

Mr Huppert said: “This is extremely welcome news. The Government has shown its strong commitment to the work taking place in this field and recognised the UK's standing as a world leader.

“Cutting this budget would have had strong implications for the economy as a whole.”

Universities and science minister David Willetts described the outcome as a “fantastic deal for the scientific community” which recognised the “their extraordinary value”.

Mr Willetts said the Government had made a “specific pledge” to ensure stable funding for medical research.

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