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£22m Babraham biomed hub hands region world lead

by Tony Qusted

A NEW biomedical research unit has opened at the Babraham Institute which hands Cambridge another world lead.

Lord Drayson, Minister for Science and Innovation, christened the £22 million Biological Support Unit (BSU).

A trailblazer for the industry with its innovative design, the facility will further the UK's capacity in basic biomedical research to investigate the mechanisms behind normal cellular functions and to understand how, over lifetime, their failure may cause disease.

This includes studying responses to infections and processes governing healthy ageing. Discoveries at Babraham have given insight into the basis of conditions like hypertension, heart failure, cancer, auto-immunity and neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's disease.

It is the translation of this knowledge that will lead to innovative approaches for therapeutic strategies to tackle healthcare challenges.

Lord Drayson said: "Britain is a world leader in Life Sciences and the Government is proud of the pioneering work of our scientists and researchers. This state-of-the-art facility will be vital, increasing the likelihood of scientific breakthroughs whilst ensuring the highest standards of animal welfare."

Babraham's director, Professor Michael Wakelam explained: "Using mouse models of human disease is revealing insights into how

the immune, nervous and cardiovascular systems develop and the importance of certain genes in human development, disease and ageing.

"Babraham's ground-breaking work on cell signalling - understanding how cells communicate with each other and cellular responses to hormones - has paved the way for novel therapeutic targets and treatment pathways for immunity, inflammation, cancer and heart disease.

"The new facility will enable our scientists to remain at the forefront of globally-competitive biomedical research and enhance bioscience in our region."

The BSU cost £17m to build with a further £5m allocated to equip the facility and was constructed with support from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).

It incorporates innovative design and construction features, with an emphasis on hi-tech automation and robotics incorporated into the building as key new design features.

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Leading the way again for UK science - The Babraham Institute



CURTAIN-RAISER: Lord Drayson opens the new biomedical research facility

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STARTS ON PAGE 13