

# THE WYE CONCORDAT PRESS INFORMATION

**EMBARGO: 00.05 HOURS THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 2005**

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ISSUED: pm Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005  
ISSUED BY: Ernst & Young

## **NEW £1 BILLION WORLD-CLASS SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CENTRE AND FACILITIES PLANNED FOR KENT**

- **“The Wye Concordat”**: unique accord signed on future of the Imperial College’s campus at Wye, near Ashford, Kent.
- A key component for delivering Ashford’s economic future slots into place.

**“The Wye Concordat”** was signed today between the leaders of Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council and the Rector of Imperial College London which seeks to assure Wye’s future as a centre for research and learning. Wye will become the home for a new **£1 billion, world-class science research and manufacturing facility – creating some 12,500 high-quality job opportunities, bringing prosperity and sustainable regeneration for Ashford, and acting as a major economic driver for Kent and the South East.**

The primary purpose of the Wye Concordat is to establish a common and workable framework for co-operation and collaboration between the three principal stakeholders in the Project, namely – Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council and Imperial College London.

The vision seeks to re-invent Wye as a centre for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and research, thus bringing prosperity to both Ashford and the wider Kent region. It will act as a major economic driver, delivering some 12,500 job opportunities and is recognised by the signatories as needing to encompass the following:-

- World-class facilities for scientific research at Wye.
- Active participation of global industrial companies in the pharmaceutical, engineering, medical or other sectors as relevant.
- Administrative facilities, ensuring appropriate back-up.
- Social and leisure facilities of an appropriate quality.
- Housing of an appropriate range to cater to a broad spectrum of householders.
- Sustainable regeneration must drive the design, funding and economic aspects.
- Deliverability must be credible and achievable.

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The future of the Wye Campus of Imperial College London had been uncertain in the light of the decline in the agricultural industry and a drop off in students wanting agri-business qualifications. With the signing today, one of the key components for delivering the economic vision for Wye and Ashford has begun to slot into place.

Leader of Ashford Borough Council, **Paul Clokie**, said: “In line with local community wishes, our Local Development Core Strategy emphasised the need to promote higher education and related research and business development at Wye, and build on the link with Imperial College.

“We are delighted to be associated with such an inspiring vision for the future of the Wye campus. We look forward to working with all relevant stakeholders to shape the emerging proposals in a way that delivers that vision while protecting the essential qualities of the village and the local community.”

Kent County Council leader, **Paul Carter**, said: “Imperial’s plans for Wye are enormously important to Kent and its economy. The employment opportunities are of real significance particularly in the knowledge based, academic and technical fields, but will also be of great significance to local businesses and service providers. Working together we must make this a reality. Kent will continue to do all it can to create exciting new job opportunities, essential to us all.”

Rector of Imperial College London, **Sir Richard Sykes**, said: “A key to success in today’s increasingly competitive global economy is how we use our knowledge and Imperial is a world leader in converting scientific knowledge into commercial success.

“In the vision for Wye, we have a fantastic opportunity to explore some of the most exciting problems in science, engineering and medicine today – in the potential for non-food crops and ‘biomass’ to be turned into clean and affordable bio-fuels and products, for example. Our aims for Wye are to build upon its traditions and enable us to attract the best and be the best. Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council have actively engaged us in their vision for Ashford’s future. This is good for Imperial, good for Wye, good for Ashford and Kent, and is great for Britain, helping to put us at the forefront of research, and creating a scientific hub for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

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