Chancellor’s £22m boost for Britain's wonder stuff: Osborne announces investment to capitalise on graphene

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- It is tougher than diamond but stretches like rubber
- The Chancellor hopes it can be used in mobile phone touch screens and super-light aircraft

By Daniel Martin

The Chancellor is to set aside £22million to help the UK profit from a super-strong material developed in British labs.

George Osborne will today announce the capital investment to enable industry to capitalise upon the Nobel Prize-winning substance of graphene.

The carbon-based material is one of the thinnest, lightest, strongest and conductive materials known to man.

Mr Osborne hopes the material, which is tougher than diamond yet stretches like rubber, can be used in mobile phone touch screens and super-light aircraft.

The super material was developed by Manchester University, and won the 2010 Nobel Prize in Physics - marking it out as one of the world’s most groundbreaking scientific achievements.

A sheet of graphene is just a single layer of carbon atoms, locked together in a strongly-bonded honeycomb pattern.

It is so thin you would need to stack three million on top of each other to get a pile one millimetre thick.

Despite this, it is 200 times stronger than steel and several times tougher than diamond.

Graphene’s versatility potentially supports an unparalleled number of industrial and everyday applications, including in electronics, energy generation and telecommunications.

London’s Imperial College will receive over £4.5million to investigate aerospace applications of graphene, working with a number of industrial partners including Airbus.

The money will be shared out by The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.

Cambridge University has been awarded over £12million for research into graphene flexible electronics and optoelectronics, which could include things like touch screens and other display devices.

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The other successful projects are based at Durham University, the University of Manchester, the University of Exeter and Royal Holloway.

The universities will be working with industrial partners who are global leaders in their fields and include Nokia, BAE Systems, Procter & Gamble, Qinetiq, Rolls-Royce, Dyson, Sharp and Philips Research. Together they will receive a further £12million.

Mr Osborne said: 'The Government moved quickly and decisively to make sure this Nobel Prize-winning technology invented here in the UK, was also developed here.

'It's exactly what our commitment to science and a proactive industrial strategy is all about - and we've beat off strong global competition. Now I am glad to announce investment that will help take it from the British laboratory to the British factory floor.

'This shows that even in tough times we are investing in science which is vital to helping the UK get ahead in the global race.'
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I notice they wouldn't let the clutz in to the clean room. Best place for him "on the outside outside looking in"
- No axe to grind, Swindon, 27/12/2012 10:18

We have sold off all our engineering so we may as well give away our technologies now.
- grate britain, stanfree, 27/12/2012 10:09

too little, too late
- paul, Manchester, 27/12/2012 10:05

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