

Exeter City Futures Board

AGENDA

1st December 2022 3pm to 4.30pm via Teams

1. The Future of Exeter City Futures CIC

Karime Hassan has written to the Board directors informing them that Jo Yelland and his secondments are coming to an end and inviting the board to reflect on options for the future of the CIC.

The value of ECF in shaping the vision for the city of Exeter, building collaboration and a shared endeavour to address some of the big challenges facing the city are tangible. Senior leaders across some of the city's key public sector institutions are comfortable working together and are aligned on the major goal of addressing the challenge to achieve a net zero city and supporting innovation. Some excellent areas of innovation and in building capacity in key skills have been realised. As a vehicle for convening, challenging and testing practical application it has been valuable in moving the city towards an ambitious goal and thinking about whole system change and the organisational culture that can stifle innovation.

The significant challenge for ECF is core capacity and funding. Part of the answer could be private sector funding, certainly the scale of the city ambition for net zero Exeter 2030 probably requires major private sector investment. However, there is a degree of cultural aversion against private sector investment that sits uneasily with Exeter City Council that would need to change in order to make private sector funding the answer to the continued performance of the CIC. The University of Exeter's Innovation Hub concept could give the city of Exeter a fresh opportunity to shape and be part of a shared city wide goal of supporting innovation in pursuit of the city's key transformational goals reflected in the City University Agreement.

There has been no diminishing of organisational appetite for leading the net zero agenda or for supporting innovation especially in the areas of addressing solutions to the major challenges facing the city, whether that be transport, energy or the use of technology and data to inform and respond to problem solving. There is simply a lack of resources available to the CIC.

Recommendation:

1,1 Directors' are invited to reflect on the immediate capacity challenges facing Exeter City Futures in the new year, whether there is a viable business in the absence of core funding, and accordingly whether Exeter City Futures CIC should be wound up at a point to be determined.

1.2 Directors give consideration to practical operational matters that may need addressing dependent on the discussion.

2. Workshops

In August 2022 the ECF board agreed to a programme of themes workshops. The purpose of each of these workshops was to engage local policy makers and system leaders in a joint discussion on the key topics to assess to what extent we have shared strategies towards Net Zero and to identify priorities for shared action to create the right conditions for systemic change.

The workshops were for specifically invited people and the set –up of the workshops was designed to allow participants to find out more about the issues and to discuss their concerns and views which were then collated for presentation to the Exeter City Futures Board and, if appropriate, subsequently to their constituent organisations for future action.

The four workshops completed are:

- Exeter Transport Strategy: Review of current strategy: to what extent will this get us to net zero: what else might we need to consider?
- Exeter Electric Vehicle Charging: Developing a clear strategy for the city: facilitator Exeter City Futures
- Commercial District Heating Network: A proposal for Exeter City Futures partners and discussion on appetite and viability
- The role Hydrogen could play in decarbonising Exeter: An opportunity to understand the potential that taking a strategic approach to hydrogen production and distribution could offer the city

Detailed reports are appended to this report containing a range of feedback and recommendation from stakeholders

Recommendation:

2.1 Directors are invited to consider the recommendations and identify priorities for further actions: key question to consider are:

- **Which recommendations do you think are already being addressed?**
- **Which recommendations are a priority for each organisation?**
- **Which recommendations should we be concerned about?**
- **Which recommendations are a priority for the City?**

3. Innovate UK Net Zero Living – Pioneer Places Call:

Beyond the “Living Lab” – an Organisational and Behavioural Approach to Scaling Net Zero

Following ideas from ECF and other partners Exeter City Council submitted a bid for the Innovate UK Net Zero Living – Pioneer Places Call with City Science as a lead partner. The project can provide grant funding of £75k in the first phase and will provide us the opportunity to bid for a further £8m in Phase 2 if we are successful.

Our Phase 1 project is framed around organisational capacity to enable the development and deployment of large-scale net zero projects, focusing on areas such as organisational risk, procurement and collaborative frameworks and is based on our learning from the work of Exeter City Futures.

BACKGROUND TO THIS PROJECT

This project has come about through the work undertaken this year through ECF where we have explored the appetite and alignment across the partnership for tackling whole scale change toward NET Zero across the city. Through a series of interactive themed workshops with city leaders from the public and private sectors we have identified behavioural and systemic barriers to large scale transformation. There is an appetite to address these fundamental issues which are likely to be found in other cities facing the same challenges as we are in Exeter. The initial grant funding will enable us to work together to create the “playbook” that we can then deploy,(hopefully with the support of phase 2 funding) into a real world situation such as the decarbonisation of buildings through the delivery of green energy Commercial District heating Networks and/or retrofit programmes. We have the potential to align this work with the University’s Innovation Centre.

OUR PROJECT: February to June 2023

Our project addresses the issue of scaling solutions to Net Zero, by focusing on the critical organisational governance barriers, such as procurement and risk preventing rapid progress. Our project will create a jointly-owned/agreed Legal, Procurement. Risk and Delivery “Playbook” that will build internal and whole system capacity and capability enabling us to work much more effectively and efficiently to bring ideas through to scale. The Playbook will identify how we can maximise the benefits of the collective assets, powers, resourcing and financing ability of our partners to address whole system change.

By addressing these key organisational barriers, we will enable a step-change beyond “small-scale”/“living-lab”-style trials, towards innovation at the whole system scale necessary to delivery Net Zero. This will allow significant whole-system projects to be brought forward addressing issues of mobility, power, heat, product manufacture and usage.

3.1 Recommendation: For Board directors to note submission of bid to Innovate UK Net Zero Living – Pioneer Places call