

MINUTES

Exeter City Futures Community Interest Company Board Meeting

Thursday 1 December 3pm - 4pm

LOCATION: **Online (MS Teams)**

PRESENT: **Glenn Woodcock (Acting Chair)** • Director, Global City Futures and Director, ECF CIC
Matt Gingell • Company Secretary, ECF CIC
Karime Hassan • Chief Executive & Growth Director, Exeter City Council, and CEO, ECF CIC
Steve Strang • Director of Estates and IT, Exeter College
Jo Yelland • Director of Transformation, Exeter City Council
Chris Tidman • Deputy CEO, Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust
Lucy Powell (Minutes) • Programme Administrator, ECF CIC

APOLOGIES: **Zion Lights** • Councillor, Exeter City Council & Member Champion Net Zero Exeter 2030
Meg Booth • Director of Climate Change, Environment & Transport, Devon County Council
Lisa Roberts • Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive, The University of Exeter

At the introduction to the meeting it was agreed, given the number of directors who could not attend the meeting, no binding decisions would be taken, but a discussion on all the subjects would take place and this would be a helpful steer for the consideration in hand.

01 THE FUTURE OF EXETER CITY FUTURES CIC

Karime re-capped on the history of ECF and the excellent work that had been done to address challenges with a view to solving problems by thinking differently, the working relationship with partners that had been formed, and the support for the innovation agenda:

- The work of the Velocity Project had been vital in funding some of the companies that had attended the various ECF workshops in October and November.
- Lisa has put her leadership behind the innovation agenda with regards to Net Zero.
- He acknowledged Glenn's support in underwriting ECF.

- As a result of coming together under ECF, the university, college and RD&E had all written letters of support for a district heating network.
- Going forward however, secondments for Karime and Jo will be ending at the end of December, there is limited capacity/resource and there are cultural issues and difficulties with the public sector sitting with the private sector.
- The university has an appetite to put clout behind and build on the work ECF undertaken to date and have the finances and resources. Going forward, the University of Exeter's innovation hub and net zero agenda presented the best opportunity to continue the type of work started by ECF. A lot of work has been piloted but ECF does not have the resources to scale the work up.
- Another option would be for the work to sit under the umbrella of the Liveable Exeter Place Board.
- It was felt by the other Board members present that the university suggestion for the way forward was the right one. ECF could be closed down but the brand could be taken into a different arrangement with the university Innovation Hub, using its ability to link into small businesses.
- Jo had attended a Key Cities Innovation meeting in Bath where the whole discussion was around universities and innovation hubs linking into Place. University of Exeter is not a member of the key cities network but it would be appropriate for it to join the key Cities Group.
- It was suggested, and agreed, that a report should be written capturing the good things that have happened whilst also addressing what didn't work and why and showcasing the willingness to try and make things happen.
- Glenn signposted the Board to the University's Strategy 2030 which focusses on three main areas and makes a bold statement about value to society rather than specifically focusing on education and research.
- There was a general discussion about ensuring the work with the university is a success and the need for the transition to be well managed with support from partners. There needs to be transparency and openness. The issue of how the work might link with the Civic University Agreement was raised.

A discussion followed about the currently ECF funded posts/projects and where they might sit in the future - namely the One Public Estate Development Fund work and the Change Makers Programme.

- Development Fund – Ian Collinson is working on this. GCF is now directly contracted through a framework with ECC.
- Change Makers - currently has three members of staff contacted until June 2023 when the funding ends.
- There has been some work around small grants, these will be awarded by the end of December.
- It was agreed that Glenn, Matt and Jo should have a conversation with the auditors about possible voluntary liquidation and should be overseen by a professional. Assets, databases etc would need to be transferred as part of the transition plan.

Karime will arrange to meet with Lisa with regards to the potential transition and to have a strategic conversation around expectations she might like to set.

02 WORKSHOPS

The reports from the four workshops had been previously circulated with the meeting papers for Board members' consideration, along with an overall report produced by Jo. Jo is not looking to set long term objectives but look at things that maybe key partners can carry forward.

The workshops were on:

- Exeter Transport Strategy
- Exeter Electric Vehicle Charging
- Commercial District Heating Network
- The Role of Hydrogen in Decarbonising Exeter

A diverse range of people had attended the workshops that had generated a considerable amount of interest and learning. In particular the Hydrogen workshop which had considered the potential of taking a strategic approach to hydrogen production and distribution for the city and taking this work forward.

Jo will be reporting the recommendations from each workshop to the ECC Council meeting.

Jo's intention generally is to highlight the role businesses can play in the city and get pledges about what businesses are doing towards 2030.

Consideration is being given to creating a vision of what a car free city centre could look like, as part of a public exercise. It would give the city a blueprint for wider conversation.

The intention is to carry out an exercise in the new year around the four main questions emerging from the workshop recommendations, and consider what we're signing up for.

There was a question around when to circulate the reports and get feedback on the learning. This is likely to be in the new year. It was agreed that the reports should be made part of the transition plan with the university.

The DHN workshop had resulted in a full house of letters of support to BEIS for funding. The bid was for 40% of the £102m project cost.

03 INNOVATE UK NET ZERO LIVING – PIONEER PLACES CALL

As a direct result of the workshops, ECC have submitted a bid for the Innovate UK Net Zero Living – Pioneer Places Call with City Science as a lead partner. The project could provide grant funding of £75k in the first phase and would provide the opportunity to bid for a further £8m in phase 2, for a real life project, if successful in phase 1.

04 AOB

Glenn suggested that a meeting of the Board should be convened to determine question of shutting down ECF and any handover plans.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TBC