

## A Clean Growth Vision for Development

Report of the Head of Economy Enterprise and Skills

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

**Recommendation:** that Cabinet

- (a) endorses the West of East Devon Clean Growth Vision and a supporting Clean Growth Strategy report to enable it to be submitted to the East Devon District Council local plan consultation
- (b) to note that this is a pilot study that can be replicated elsewhere in Devon to fit in with local planning cycles and support sustainable development and the Devon Carbon Plan.

### 1. Summary

This report seeks the Council's endorsement of the Clean Growth Vision for the West of East Devon and the strategy, commissioned by the County Council and agree it is submitted as part of the County Council's evidence into the East Devon District Council local plan consultation. The report has been commissioned as a pilot approach by the Council to support establishing a clear framework for transitioning to a net zero economy. This approach can be applied to support other local plan development at the appropriate time, and subject to budget, to support the Devon Carbon Plan implementation.

The vision document and supporting strategy focus on low carbon economic growth in the West of East Devon (WoED). The report outlines a vision for the area, recommends a series of actions that reflect priorities for growth and contains an Annexe of implementation projects that fit with the vision and could be used as a framework for funding bids.

The study is also being submitted to East Devon District Council's strategic planning committee for their endorsement as evidence for the production of the local plan.

The Clean Growth Vision for the WoED is in three parts – a Vision document, a supporting technical report and an Annexe of anchor opportunities, set out in the appendices.

### 2. Introduction

The government defines clean growth as meaning growing our national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions and launched its 10 point plan for a green industrial revolution in 2020. Priority areas for investment range from offshore wind and greener buildings to green finance and protecting our natural environment, with

the intention to decouple growth from carbon emissions and to enable the transition to a net zero economy through promoting innovation.

In October 2021 government published its Net Zero Strategy, in the run up to COP26, which sets out how the UK will deliver on its commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership also published its Blueprint for Clean Growth in 2021, which aims to grow the economy sustainably by delivering inclusive economic prosperity while protecting the environment, lowering emissions and enhancing natural capital. Six themes were prioritised towards achieving net zero by the 2040's. This timeframe links with the draft East Devon Local Plan which runs until 2040.

The Council has declared a climate emergency and committed to reach net zero for the Council in 2030 and for the County by 2050. This study helps identify how the Council can support economic growth in future, while meeting its net zero ambitions through sector innovation, natural capital investment, green skills and reducing emissions from transport and energy, focussing on part of East Devon.

The Council commissioned this Clean Growth Vision to feed into the East Devon District Council local plan preparation and consultation as part of the evidence base, to consider the opportunities for development of clean growth sectors in the area and to support the sustainability of the airport. Opportunities to develop and support electric flights provides options for Exeter airport, in the wake of the loss of business resulting from the pandemic and the collapse of Flybe, supporting high quality jobs in the area. The first electric flight in England recently took off from Exeter Airport.

The study considers the west of the district, including Cranbrook, nearby employment sites, including Exeter Science Park and Skypark and the wider surrounding area, including the Clyst Valley regional park and potential new areas for growth. As well as considering spatial factors and sectors, the vision also considers opportunities from the move to home working and covers other climate change aspects, such as transport, energy generation, skills requirements and building standards.

Following a procurement process, City Science were appointed to undertake the work, which outlines the vision, makes a series of 11 delivery recommendations and provides an Annex of 8 catalytic example projects that could deliver clean growth objectives and net zero outcomes.

### **3. Proposal**

This vision and supporting technical report and annex together represent a clean growth development and investment plan for the area identified, which could be replicated across other areas of the County and be used to support funding bids, for example for UK Shared Prosperity Fund or future growth funding.

It fits with the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and the commitment for the county to be net zero by 2050, as identified in the Devon Carbon Plan.

The WoED is a place of exceptional assets - a special combination of natural capital, skilled innovators, ambitious local partnerships, energy resources, and ample space for business growth. It is a natural “gateway” linking Exeter and East Devon to the world through national and international connectivity. Already an established focal point for growth, the area is home to a growing number of high-performing, knowledge-intensive businesses, employment sites and new housing.

The vision is for the area to be a carbon leader -for new development to be zero carbon and for the region to take pro-active steps to address emissions from legacy sectors.

It sets out an ambition to provide leadership and new business opportunities in “hard to decarbonise” sectors where innovation is vital and where we have world-leading strengths –sustainable aviation, decarbonisation of transport, greener buildings, smart grids and environmental risk and finance.

Utilising our world-leading skills delivery to provide opportunities for all to ensure that growth is inclusive and to deliver a place that enhances and works with its natural environment, providing an exceptional quality of life for all its residents.

The vision is based on the idea that long-term job growth will be focused on knowledge-based assets and increased innovation. The approach advocates bringing together industry, academic expertise, investment and demonstrators within a ‘Living Lab’. Four key areas for proactive investment that will help unlock the greatest economic benefits are identified – Sustainable Aviation, Greener Buildings Green Finance and Innovation and Smart Grids.

Key themes identified are:

- Redefining how we work and live well - unrivalled potential for the provision of a world-class lifestyle offer, set within the context of the Clyst Valley Regional Park and offers the potential for new types of workspace, that seize the opportunities for hybrid working.
- A Thriving Innovation Ecosystem- to create a destination that fosters an entrepreneurial community, focused on solving society’s biggest challenges through the application and demonstration of world-class knowledge to stimulate new public, private, and research partnerships to unlock clean growth.
- World-Class Demonstrators in Core Technologies- unlocking growth through four core technologies and a catalytic portfolio of innovation projects across Clean Growth sectors, with a focus on Sustainable Aviation, Greener Buildings, Green Finance & Innovation and Smart Grids.
- Zero-Carbon Place-making - ensuring that every home is designed to be zero carbon and to create a sustainable, net zero carbon community, that gives residents and businesses a genuine alternative to the private car.

- Restoring Nature Connections - blurs the boundary between the built environment and natural landscape, enhancing the connections between people and nature. Integrated networks of nature recovery sites, habitats and wildlife corridors will weave through the area, supporting biodiversity net gain and rewilding and bringing nature to residents' doorsteps.
- Powered by Nature – using abundant natural resources to be leaders in clean energy infrastructure and with the opportunity to become net exporters, whilst spearheading the clean energy revolution and enhancing our natural environment. This will require wholesale change - trialling and adopting new technologies across our entire economy.
- A Place for Creative Minds - creating the platform for new opportunity. To create the conditions for success by developing and delivering tailored skills pathways. Our vision, combined with world-leading skills provision, will inspire and excite a new generation of innovators. The vision aims to open up opportunities to all, while delivering a wide range of co-benefits including improved community cohesion, improved environment, healthier homes, and reduced energy and travel costs.

The report includes 11 recommendations for delivery and provides some relevant case study examples from other locations. In summary the types of recommendation include:

- Working in partnerships - to secure investment, market the area and develop bids for government funding
- Growing our innovation potential through links to University, business support and encouraging entrepreneurship
- Considering needs for infrastructure to support net zero development
- Develop a skills strategy to reflect growth sectors
- Wider considerations, such as housing affordability and the district's climate targets
- Development of a clean growth delivery action plan.

The Annexe of Anchor Opportunities provides 8 catalytic projects that could be a focus for future funding bids or private investment, with an idea of costs, jobs, skills and GVA increases they would support and provides some examples from other areas where appropriate:

1. Smart Grid and Energy Trading Research Centre £15 millions
2. East Devon private wire feasibility study £50,000-£75,000
3. Zero Carbon Community and Living Lab £300-400 millions
4. Built Environment Innovation and Skills Hub £10 millions
5. Sustainable Aviation Research Centre £20 millions
6. Sustainable Finance Cluster £6-7 millions
7. Crystal Clear Clyst Bond design study £100,000 – £110,000
8. Clean Growth Gateway Park.

#### **4. Options/Alternatives**

There were two options to consider, endorse the vision document or do nothing.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
Endorse the vision, technical report and Annexe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• offers recommendations and schemes to deliver clean growth in part of the County</li><li>• garner support for the approach by formally endorsing</li><li>• shows commitment to net zero objectives while supporting innovative economic growth</li><li>• opportunity to replicate for other areas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Independent report, so not all findings will completely align with DCC priorities</li></ul>
Do nothing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunity to be a catalyst for change not taken</li><li>• No buy-in from partners</li><li>• Report “sits on shelf”</li><li>• Limited opportunity to show potential to other districts</li></ul>

#### **5. Consultations**

City Science consulted with stakeholders within the Council and partners, via circulation of drafts for review, webinars, teams meetings, telephone calls and emails and the Council worked with East Devon district colleagues to finalise the scope and content to ensure a fit with local plan requirements. Key stakeholders, such as the University, Science Park, Airport, Exeter College were targeted to ensure their input had been considered.

#### **6. Financial Considerations**

No financial considerations. No additional funding is being sought to extend this approach to consider other local plan evidence. External funding will be sought as the primary source of investment to take the recommendations forward.

#### **7. Legal Considerations**

There are no specific legal considerations.

## **8. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)**

This report promotes a positive environmental message regarding the ability to carry out clean growth in Devon. There is no direct environmental benefit or impact from the study itself, however if the vision and recommendations were implemented there would be a significant positive environmental impact for the area and the Devon Carbon Plan overall.

## **9. Equality Considerations**

Where relevant to the decision, the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

taking account of age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), gender and gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women/ new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage/civil partnership status in coming to a decision, a decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

This may be achieved, for example, through completing a full Equality Impact Needs Assessment / Impact Assessment or other form of options/project management appraisal that achieves the same objective.

In progressing this proposal, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Councillors and is also available alongside this Report on the Council's website at: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/a-clean-growth-vision-for-development/>, which Councillors will need to consider for the purposes of this item.

There are no equality considerations impacting on the decisions sought from the recommendations in this report.

## **10. Reasons for Recommendations**

The Clean Growth Vision developed for the west of East Devon supports the development of clean growth sectors, skills and technologies in the area and provides recommendations and catalytic projects for future investment, sector innovation, skills provision and to protect the future of the airport and aviation sector.

Endorsing the report enables the Council to support our climate change ambitions in East Devon but also by promoting the Vision as a blueprint, that can be used to

develop further opportunities for net zero growth in other sectors, for example marine, offshore wind and agritech could be key opportunities in other parts of the county worth investigating.

Keri Denton  
Head of Economy Enterprise and Skills

Electoral Divisions: Broadclyst; Whimple and Blackdown

Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery and Skills Councillor Rufus Gilbert

**Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers**

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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The West of East Devon Redefining how we work and live well – A Clean Growth Vision of the West of East Devon  
Vision, Strategy and Anchor Opportunities documents 2021  
Available as an additional document to this Cabinet Report at  
<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=4178&Ver=4>

A Clean Growth Vision for Development - Final