

Exeter & East Devon Growth Point
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High Flyers in Exeter and East Devon

Looking beyond the recession to a brighter future, with opportunities to gain skills and skilled employment, was undoubtedly uppermost on the minds of East Devon District Council (EDDC) councillors last week as they made a resolution to grant outline planning permission for Exeter Science Park and also issued the outline planning permission for Flybe's state-of-the-art Training Academy.

Both of these developments are major components of the Exeter and East Devon Growth Point and together form part of a package for growth that will not only offer skilled job opportunities but also provide essential links between industry and education establishments in the South West.

Cllr Ray Franklin, EDDC's Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Regeneration, explains why these projects are so important to the growth of Exeter and East Devon. "These developments are absolutely fundamental for skills development in the area. We have known for some time that there is a real need to address the skills gap and providing direct links between education and industry will undoubtedly help to improve the skills of the current work force. Both Exeter Science Park and the Flybe Training Academy will be shining examples of this principle at work".

Now that the outline planning permission for Flybe's Training Academy and accompanying hotel has been issued, work can begin on site. This news was welcomed by Simon Witts, Director of Safety, Quality and Training at Flybe. "The issuing of planning permission represents the final step towards the development of the site. We received confirmation earlier in the year that we were to be given a £4.3 million grant from the Learning and Skills Council, which in turn unlocked £2.8 million from the South West RDA (Regional Development Agency) - and so now it's all systems go! Ground work is expected to begin before the end of the year."

As one of the first 150 businesses to have signed the Government's new skills pledge, Flybe is committed to helping all its employees to develop the necessary skills and achieve their professional ambitions.

Supported by GoSkills (the sector skills council for passenger transport) and in partnership with Exeter College and the University of Exeter, the Training Academy will support the delivery of appropriate industry-

recognised vocational qualifications. These include Cabin Crew NVQs, Engineering Apprenticeships, call centre NVQ's and foundation degrees and will help address the crucial need for skills development in the South West.

Devon County Councillor William Mumford , current Chair of Exeter and East Devon Growth Point, added: "We also recognise the need to provide skilled employment opportunities for those people who come through the education system locally. We want to retain those skills here in Exeter and East Devon and Exeter Science Park could play a big part in that, whilst at the same time providing for the needs of the many skilled people who are predicted to want to move to the region in the coming decades".

Exeter Science Park, which will provide services for knowledge intensive firms, will have strong links with the University of Exeter Innovation Centre, which itself provides start-up units for new knowledge intensive businesses.

Sir William Wakeham, the new Chairman of Exeter Science Park, said: "News of the resolution to grant planning permission is a major step towards the delivery of what we are sure will be a world-class Science Park." He went on to explain how the partners want "to build a thriving Science-based community that will also have links with the Met Office and Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry. We want Exeter Science Park to make a significant contribution to the Government's innovation agenda, encouraging knowledge transfer between research and innovative business".

The Partners in Exeter Science Park, which include the University of Exeter, the Met Office, South West RDA, Exeter City Council, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council, are keen to encourage the development of Exeter as a Science and Knowledge-based city and to create an environment at the Science Park that encourages enterprise in science.

Cllr Adrian Fullam from Exeter City Council explained the benefits of Exeter Science Park for the local economy: "With the potential to create up to 3,000 jobs in the first 15 to 20 years, we see the Science Park as helping to position the city as a serious regional business centre specialising in scientific and technological activities. Yes, this site will be a high value employment location attracting higher income earners with higher expenditure into the local economy; but it will also develop small and medium sized companies employing people with a range of skills, from school leavers and new graduates to high grade scientists".

Now that outline planning permission for Exeter Science Park has been agreed by East Devon's Development Control Committee, work to clear the site can begin next year, with the first buildings underway in 2011.

Alan Douglas, the Science Park Director representing the Met Office explained: "A science park on the edge of Exeter will bring benefits to the local economy and the Met Office. The science park can encourage more local students to look at scientific careers and help develop a growing pool of scientific talent in the

area. The influx of new science based companies and organisations will open up new opportunities for scientific collaboration with the Met Office and potential new partnerships to market new products and services."

Ian Thompson, Area Director for the South West RDA, a funding partner for both projects and the Exeter and East Devon Growth Point said: "Our strategy for future economic growth and the development of a low carbon economy means promoting high value skills, technology, and research and development – and within the Exeter and East Devon Growth Point we have the right ingredients coming together for this. These projects are going to play a big role in encouraging enterprise and innovation in the Exeter area in our wider strategy of unlocking business potential across the region."

It is hoped that there will be lots of activity in the Exeter and East Devon growth area next year, with many major developments poised to begin construction work. In addition to the Science Park and the Training Academy the local authority partners are anticipating site work to begin on the New Community at Cranbrook and the business District called Skypark.

Notes To Editors:

New Growth Points

Exeter and East Devon New Growth Point is a partnership commitment between Devon County Council, Exeter City Council, East Devon District Council, The South West Regional Development Agency and the Government to deliver sustainable economic growth.

Exeter and East Devon was recognised by the Government as a New Growth Point (NGP) in 2006. Further information about New Growth Points and Partnership for Growth with the Government, can be found at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/newgrowthpoints

Planning Services

East Devon District Council www.eastdevon.gov.uk

Exeter Science Park

www.exetersciencepark.co.uk

Flybe Training Academy

http://www.flybe.com/training/academy_plans.htm

For any further information:

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