

# Exeter Civic University Agreement



# A University with and for Exeter

The Exeter Civic University Agreement (CUA) recognises that the University is fundamentally linked to the place and people of Exeter. The University of Exeter is a vibrant knowledge hub with global connections, a major regional employer and important contributor to the local economy. Alongside its Partners it plays an important role through the impact of education, research and knowledge exchange activities underpinning the economic, health, social and environmental fabric of our region.

At the heart of this Agreement is a belief that partnership is the catalyst that sets progress in motion. Partnerships within our City are now more important than ever, as we seek to ensure a thriving yet sustainable economy, healthy and happy people, a vibrant culture and a spirit that connects us all with a pride of place and a determination to keep moving forward together.

Working together as Exeter Partners our ambition is to generate benefits for our City, its businesses, and its people. This Agreement builds on already strong partnership foundations, and a history of mutual engagement. Yet the challenges

we face are greater than ever before, and the time is now right to build on these foundations so that we can exploit opportunity, address challenges, and co-create and deliver solutions.

Our Missions and the Partnership Framework which sit at the heart of this Agreement respond to an analysis of local needs combined with extensive consultation with partners, stakeholders and the wider community. Over 80 organisations and 1000 individuals have contributed their time, thoughts and ideas.

The University and its anchor City Partners, as signatories of this Civic University Agreement, are committed to working together to help overcome the major social, economic and environmental challenges that we all face, together for Exeter. We are bound by the Partnership Framework set out in this document to seek to improve levels of prosperity, equal opportunity, sustainability, health and wellbeing for Exeter's citizens, families and communities. We will work together to deliver our agreed Missions.

## Signatories



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L.O. Roberts".

**Professor Lisa Roberts**

Vice Chancellor of the University  
of Exeter



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PB: Bialyk".

**Cllr Philip Bialyk**

Leader, Exeter  
City Council



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne Tracey".

**Suzanne Tracey**

Chief Executive Royal  
Devon and Exeter NHS  
Foundation Trust, RD&E  
Hospital, Exeter



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Laramy".

**John Laramy CBE**

Exeter College Principal  
and Chief Executive

# Our Missions

Our Missions present a clear call to action for the Partners. As Partners we will work collaboratively to deliver positive change for the City.

Support the  
Sustainable and  
Inclusive Growth  
of the City

Deliver a Net  
Zero Exeter

Build a City of  
Aspiration and  
Opportunity

Support  
an ambitious  
Culture and  
Tourism  
offer

Enhance the  
Health and  
Wellbeing of  
our citizens



# Support the Sustainable and Inclusive Growth of the City...

Exeter plays a significant role as a driver for the wider regional economy, with a Travel to Work area that covers much of East Devon, Teignbridge and Mid Devon. Exeter functions as a hub for high value-added sectors and highly paid employment in the area, outperforming the wider region in terms of productivity and skills. Large employers dominate in the public sector – key employers include the Met Office, the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (RD&E), Exeter College, and the University of Exeter. Building a vibrant private sector will be important to the future success of the City.

Exeter needs to accelerate the transition towards a new economy that can attract and retain highly skilled people, and drive sustainable growth in the wider county. Understanding Exeter's distinctive identity and potential for the growth of the wider region is vital to forging a path to a new economy that can successfully include surrounding areas, while offering real opportunities for access and

advancement to all Exeter's residents. This principle of sustainable and inclusive growth should be central for the city, its wider region and county. As partners we will work to ensure that the local economy is enhanced through access to research, innovation, support for business and skills.



## Our Ambitions

- To launch a Net Zero Innovation Hub, supporting businesses and organisations with sustainable business transformation services, new R&D facilities and access to innovation support. This will provide a hub for entrepreneurs, companies, academics, students and citizens to share data, insight, ideas, and creativity.
- To utilise the University's knowledge assets to attract and support new business start-ups to the City and support existing businesses to grow and scale, bringing the University Enterprise Zone into the City, linked to Exeter Science Park.
- To support the economy with skills development, particularly for green and digital transformation and for health.
- To work collaboratively to enhance the reputation of the City as a place to do business and develop careers.
- To responsibly manage the growth of the University and listen and respond to the needs of the City and its people.

# Deliver a Net Zero Exeter...

In 2019, Exeter City Council declared a climate emergency, and its intention to be a carbon neutral city by 2030. In response, Exeter City Futures (ECF) curated a clear roadmap to carbon neutrality: the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan, which has now been officially adopted by Exeter City Council<sup>1</sup>. The Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan sets out ways in which individuals and organisations can play their part in achieving the Net Zero ambition. However, collaboration magnifies the speed and scale at which change can be realised.

Our City is a world leading hub for environmental science, with the highest concentration of climate scientists in any world city, including 5 out of the world's top 21 climate scientists. As the home of the Met Office and over 1,500 companies operating in the environmental business sector, environmental science is not just an academic pursuit but the beating heart of the local economy – something which

is enabled by trail blazing partnerships between public partners, businesses and the University. Meeting our Net Zero commitments means that this unparalleled expertise needs to be focused on new and innovative approaches to local Net Zero challenges, and the development of the green skills and jobs our country needs for the future.

<sup>1</sup> [www.exetercityfutures.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Net-Zero-Exeter-2030-Plan-PU.pdf](http://www.exetercityfutures.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Net-Zero-Exeter-2030-Plan-PU.pdf)





## Our Ambitions

- Create a vision for Exeter that leads the way in Net Zero innovation, creating a blueprint that the Government can use to set the rest of the UK on a quicker path to Net Zero.
- Work with partners to attract further green investment, support transformation of the city of Exeter's infrastructure and help SMEs manage their climate transitions.
- Working with Partners through the vehicle of Exeter City Futures, to deliver the Net Zero Roadmap. To show leadership as a city, on the climate agenda, through promoting our considerable international expertise and assets whilst demonstrating how we can put this research and expertise into practice locally.

# Build a City of Aspiration and Opportunity...

Overall Exeter has a high economy with strong levels of employment and skills. The presence of the University means that there are higher than average rate of degree qualification among the workforce.

Despite these successes Exeter has lower rates of GCSE and A Level performance and there is a considerable (26.4 percentage point) gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students achieving grades 9-4 in both English and Maths. Fewer young people go on to participate in higher education than is the case nationally and the gap widens for disadvantaged students. Thus the benefits of our economic success are not reaching all parts of our community equally.

Our graduate retention is also an ongoing challenge in Exeter with only 28% of University of Exeter students remaining in the South West region and 13% remaining in the City. This represents a loss of talent for the City and wider region.

Our City boasts excellent education institutions that include Exeter College (Ofsted outstanding and Rated Top College twice in five years by FE Week's annual NICDEX), and a Top 15 Russell Group University (ranked 149 in the QS World Rankings and 12th in The Times and the Sunday Times Good University Guide (2020)). Both institutions are rated as Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework. A unique

partnership between the University of Exeter and Exeter College has developed one of the first two dedicated Mathematics Schools nationally (Ofsted rated outstanding at first appraisal) and helped forge the creation of the Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust.

Through initiatives such as the Data Analytics Skills Escalator, we have sought to create pathways to data analytics skills and in doing so have developed a model which could be replicated for other strategic skills needs in the City and beyond. The prominence of the University of Exeter and Exeter College in the development of the South West Institute of Technology will also see a step change in the delivery of data, digital and advanced manufacturing skills in the City, including in green transitions, facing the government's 10 point green industrial plan.

By working together as Partners we have already demonstrated what can be achieved, but there is more we can do to truly transform the prospects of our citizens, providing access to skills, to high paid employment and building that sense of aspiration and opportunity to succeed.



## Our Ambitions

- To create a more formalised education alliance to accelerate the progress that has been made and build an Exeter Education Ecosystem that is truly exceptional.
- Work through the new alliance to address the future of skills and workforce needs, ensuring that we build a City of aspiration and opportunity, and gain true national and global recognition of our alliance. In doing so we will seek to become a national and global beacon for an exemplar education ecosystem.
- Work with Partners to develop and deliver an effective City Skills Plan.
- Seek to retain the University's graduates in the City through opportunities for work experience, student projects linked to the needs of Exeter businesses and community and support our students to establish their own businesses in the City.
- Expand the University's lifelong learning offer to local people through the provision of continuous professional development (CPD) and explore ways of increasing access to provision for communities and the voluntary sector.

# Support an Ambitious Culture and Tourism Offer for the City...

Regionally, tourism is an extremely important sector and a key driver of productivity. Exeter has many of the assets required to develop a thriving and vibrant culture and tourism offer. It has a wealth of heritage and cultural assets, an impressive independent arts scene and a City Council which prioritises culture. The University of Exeter is a research-intensive university with its own ambitious Arts and Culture Strategy.

Exeter Culture supports the City's arts ecology, and creates new strategic connections to other sectors. Hosted by the University of Exeter, in partnership with Exeter City Council, Exeter College, inExeter and the Arts Council England, it aims to attract and retain creative talent and to ensure arts and culture are integrated within the City's broader strategic planning. Exeter's place-based Cultural Strategy outlines five key themes: Environment; Wellbeing; Heritage Innovation; Creative Place Making and Learning and Literacy.

COVID-19 has hit the visitor economy particularly hard with all businesses involved in tourism and hospitality being asked to close for prolonged periods. As the economy emerges from COVID, skills shortages have the potential to hamper recovery. The impact on events and venues has been considerable thus there is a clear challenge for partners to work together to support the revival of the City's cultural and heritage assets and businesses, both in the short term but also as a critical part of place making.

## Our Ambitions

- Support the City in enhancing the visitor experience to become a leading sustainable visitor destination and with one with strong place-based cultural investment and development.
- Support Exeter as a UNESCO City of Literature<sup>2</sup>, a collaboration between Exeter City Council, University of Exeter, Libraries Unlimited, Literature Works, Exeter Cathedral, Exeter Culture and Exeter Canal & Quay Trust. This venture is jointly supporting the creative, social and economic potential of literature development for the City and the Greater Exeter area.
- Deliver a new Creative Arc for the City bringing together the University, the City Council and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) into a new strategic collaboration that will represent a new model of cultural partnership. This will act as a catalyst for economic development, support social change and build our global reputation as a Liveable City.
- Support student engagement with civic life by bolstering volunteering opportunities in events which support arts and culture across the City.
- Celebrate the multiculturalism of the University of Exeter students who come from all corners of the world and represent many faiths and cultures and embrace opportunities to celebrate this diversity and foster integration within the City.

<sup>2</sup> [www.exetercityofliterature.com](http://www.exetercityofliterature.com)



# Enhance the Health and Wellbeing of our Citizens...

Exeter is a discrete healthcare geography with 147,000 patients living within 5 miles of the city centre. Average life expectancy in Exeter is 82.6 years, slightly higher than the Devon average and the national average. Yet Exeter includes some of the most deprived areas in Devon and indeed, nationally.

Health inequalities exist within Exeter - there is a gap of 16.8 years between the areas with the longest life expectancy and the shortest. Life expectancy is also markedly different for some communities such as those with complex needs and homeless populations.

These inequalities have widened in recent years<sup>3</sup> and action is required at a local level to empower individuals and local communities to take responsibility with the right support. The Population Health Management programme has identified the following health and wellbeing priorities for the Eastern Devon locality which includes Exeter: mental health with a particular focus on loneliness; support for unpaid carers; prevention – children and young people's admission through self-harm; and reducing pressure on urgent and emergency services.

As elsewhere, the healthcare system in Exeter comprises a number of different NHS organisations as well as a number of charities which provide NHS funded

services and play a key role in healthcare provision. Primary Care provision is delivered via 16 GP Practices which in 2014 formed Exeter Primary Care (EPC), while the main provider of Secondary Care in the City is The Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust.

Exeter has long taken an integrated approach to the delivery of care and wellbeing services. Across wider Devon, as elsewhere, we are moving towards an Integrated Care System (ICS) with health and social care organisations working together with local communities across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay to improve people's health, wellbeing and care across the region.

Wellbeing Exeter is a partnership of public, voluntary and community sector organisations who have come together to explore better ways of working to reduce the call on professional health services, integrate health with social care and community, and improve wellbeing for individuals. One of the biggest health and

<sup>3</sup> file:///C:/Users/vja211/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/NetCache/Content.Outlook/7PHZXT23/DCC-Public-Health-Annual-Report-2021-Accessible-Version.pdf"DCC-Public-Health-Annual-Report-2021-Accessible-Version.pdf



wellbeing charities, Exeter City Community Trust (ECCT) works in partnership with Exeter City Football Club.

The University engages with and supports the sector in the City in myriad ways.

The College of Medicine and Health works closely with the NHS to train the next generation of clinicians, to build clinical research excellence capacity and deliver health improvements in a regional context. It also works closely with the community and voluntary sectors.

As the City emerges from the pandemic and moves towards recovery, the challenges of securing funding to sustain and expand the successful networks and partnerships across the City, while meeting the skills needs of the health and care sector will be critical.

## Our Ambitions

- Working through a new Exeter Healthy Living Panel work with city and regional stakeholders to co-develop solutions to everyday challenges and contribute to addressing health and wellbeing policy challenges that impact on the city.
- To attract the world's most talented clinicians and healthcare workers, training and retaining local talent to develop their careers in Exeter and Devon.
- Enable communities and VCSE organisations to access University of Exeter expertise through research centres such as the Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health, and initiatives such as the Community Law Clinic.
- Encourage active and healthy lifestyles through working closely with local organisations and ensuring that where possible, University of Exeter facilities are open and accessible to the public.

## Community and Student Engagement

Underpinning these missions will be a commitment to ongoing community consultation and engagement of the City's students, including:

- Establishing a new Community Panel to identify issues, challenges and opportunities, and support the development of an annual plan of community engagement.
- Hosting an annual Public and Community Engagement conference, The Exchange, to celebrate the positive influence of community and public involvement on university research.
- Promoting diversity and inclusion in our community through engagement and leadership.
- Supporting opportunities for university students to volunteer in the community and for “community engaged learning” to co-produce knowledge with and for the community.
- Supporting business and VCSE partners through student projects, professional pathways, internships and work experience.
- Promoting opportunities for students and researchers to work on regionally-identified challenges and work with local communities to develop solutions.

## Governance

Central to this Agreement is the Partnership Framework, which sets out the ways in which the Partners will work together to develop and deliver our shared agenda, monitor progress and refresh the Civic University Agreement. This will

embed close and strategic joint working both now and in the future, and will provide a vehicle for co-creating solutions, allowing the Partners to bring benefit to the City of Exeter and the wider sub region.



# Guiding Principles

The Partnership Framework aims to:

- Enable better communication between the partners and the community, setting out a clear mechanism for day to day working;
- Harness research expertise to address Exeter's challenges, supporting priority setting and co-production of solutions, providing a clear route to local impact;
- Be dynamic and organic – adapting to circumstance;
- Provide routes to global engagement;
- Actively engage Exeter's students in the public and community realm, matching student interest to community need and supporting engaged learning<sup>4</sup>;
- Embed collaborative public engagement based on the principle of reciprocity, involving the flow of knowledge, information and benefits between the parties;
- Embed clear evaluation and review processes;
- Be transparent and accountable.

<sup>4</sup> Engaged learning<sup>4</sup> facilitates students to apply theory to real-world contexts outside of the University and to co-produce knowledge with and for the community. Engaged learning provides students with the skills which increase their employability, and improve their personal and professional development, while communities gain access to skills to help develop, evaluate or communicate their work.



# Our Partnership Framework

<b>Governance Structure</b>	The Civic University Agreement will be overseen by a Civic University Partnership Board, chaired by the University, supported by a simple operating structure bringing together leads from each institution, with quarterly meetings. Regular information updates will be provided Partner organisations and for the Liveable Exeter Place Board.
<b>Mission</b>	The Missions will be jointly owned and agreed by the partners, taking on board alignment with existing City strategies.
<b>Agenda Setting</b>	The Partners will identify areas of “common ground” where it is expected that joint working will add value to the core mission of each institution. The agenda will be shaped by participants on an ongoing basis and everyone commits to attending and listening respectfully to partners when they bring issues and ideas to the group.
<b>Brokerage</b>	Partners will identify lead connectors in each organisation that can broker wider relationships and be a point of contact across the partners. Over time we would expect to have a visible and transparent set of institutional networks that will facilitate the sharing of knowledge and joint working.
<b>Sharing Intelligence and Horizon Scanning</b>	An annual “Exeter Horizons” conference will allow each institution to widen engagement across their workforces, identifying important issues, share intelligence, and identify the potential for a collective response.
<b>Co-creation</b>	The Partnership will embrace a ‘social enquiry’ approach to working on identified issues or challenges. We will collate information, research best practice, identify solutions, test them, and develop proposals for action. Through our panels and Task and Finish Groups we will engage the wider community of stakeholders to support this co-creation.

<b>Responding to opportunities</b>	The partnership should have provision to develop Task and Finish Groups or Mission Groups to enable development of action plans and rapid responses from the partnership.
<b>Community engagement</b>	The partnership will adopt ways of working that support effective community engagement, set out clearly in the annual planning process.
<b>Resourcing</b>	The University of Exeter's Innovation, Impact and Business Department will provide resource to initiate and support the Agreement.  The CUA will be supported by a small budget – paid for via a collective pot to cover essential staffing – and scrutinised by the members. As the partnership develops and identifies new initiatives and projects, joint decisions will be taken on how this is resourced, including provision for joint bids for funding.
<b>Communications</b>	The Partnership will adopt clear guidelines for promoting the Partnership and its work and managing communication protocols.
<b>Annual Planning Cycle</b>	The Agreement will be accompanied by a planning cycle enabling progress to be monitored, Missions to be reviewed, new issues and challenges identified, and consultation to be undertaken.

We will begin immediately by establishing: a Healthy Exeter Panel; a Stakeholder Task and Finish Group for Innovation and Business; an Exeter focused School-College-University Education Alliance; enhanced support for delivery of our Net Zero Roadmap; and partnering a unique new Creative Arc to help support Arts and Culture in the City.



