

NEXT STEPS

The 360 Centre



Please read in conjunction with 360 Vision Statement and Feasibility Study

The 360 Group is an East Lothian based community body seeking to make use of the former Power Station site, extending in all to about 99000 sq m. This is a matter with a long but important history for the people of Cockenzie, Prestonpans and Port Seton.

A little history

As you know, the Power Station was demolished in September 2015. The site has been cleared, and the westernmost half has been taken up by Inchcape's substation for its large scale offshore wind farm situated the northeast. Connection to the National Grid is to be at Cockenzie, on the former Power Station site. Inchcape has planning permission, which has been activated.

The long history of power generation at this site provided steady employment for hundreds of people in this area for many decades. The Chimneys came to symbolise the communities of Prestonpans, Cockenzie and Port Seton, embodying a coherent purpose, and, on the whole, a good relationship was developed with Scottish Power. Every family in the area seemed to have some connection with the Power Station and the bond with the site was, and is, very strong.

In modern times we have come to better understand the problems with fossil fuels, and the collapse of coal has led to a changed focus on sustainability, climate change, and renewables. Nobody would go back to the days of coal. The challenge for this generation has come to be how we grasp those changes by understanding and explaining them, and making them real for those who come after us.

The vision for the site

You will know of 360's Vision for a Centre for Climate Change. The Vision document is attached to this letter, just to remind you. It has been born out of community ambition; partly from the idea that Power and Cockenzie are synonymous, a Community wanting to value and celebrate its past, and more importantly to create a new environment focusing on new technology and understanding. One where we all begin to undertake our corporate and personal responsibilities for each other and the place where we live, as Climate Change overtakes us all.

Seven and a half years on from demolition, East Lothian Council still doesn't have a clear and imaginative solution for the Former Power Station site. The Community thinks that is regrettable. It is time, we think, to bring the future uses of the site into the forum of public opinion, and out of the shadows of commercial and local government secrecy.

The 360 Vision proposes a Centre for Climate Change, an innovative "renewables space", open green space, perhaps in the form of a community park with public and art installations, all located on the Former Power Station site.

The Study and Planning Permission

360 Group sought, and was granted, funding by ELC to carry out a feasibility study of its ideas, using appropriately qualified consultants. Planning Solutions Consulting Limited was commissioned to carry out a feasibility study, in the end jointly funded by East Lothian Council, Inchcape and Sea Green. After a couple of drafts, the Study has now come forward.

The 360 Group will shortly submit an application for Planning Permission in principle, in order to bring the debate about the best public use of the former Power Station site into the public domain. The Feasibility Study which is attached to this letter will serve as the baseline for that application. Although it covers a lot of ground, the 360 Group does not accept its final conclusions without qualification, and will continue to work on them and perhaps with the authors to provide an agreed basis for taking matters forward. We are not in a position to sign off the invoice at present. It is hoped that ELC will strenuously support the application and the fund raising effort which must follow any Planning Permission which may be granted.

The 360 Group seeks to make use of the 99,900 sq m site at the Former Power Station to provide a facility that increases people's understanding and skill base and enables them to learn more efficient and effective ways of tackling the climate emergency. There is a strong driver to create some employment opportunities through the development of the Centre. The primary rationale for the Centre is simple. Everyone knows that we are facing a Climate Emergency. Rising sea levels, increasing droughts, wildfires and storms alongside higher temperatures are driving resource scarcity, the mass movement of people and significant

negative impacts on the global economy. A connected biodiversity crisis is affecting our life supporting ecosystems. If there was ever any doubt, these existential modern crises are now fully reflected in Scotland's new National Planning Framework (NPF 4, just published).

The 360 Steering Group believes that a Centre for Climate Change would attract funding. We have identified at least a dozen institutions in Scotland where the study of Climate Change is being pursued. None of them have an open, outward facing prospectus like this. There are a number of core component elements:

- A **Climate Change Centre** will anchor the development and provide a multi-faceted space, including laboratories, study areas and exhibition areas. The use of cutting-edge immersive exhibits, virtual reality and activities will create engaging and inspiring experiences centred around climate change. The centre will be of a signature design and incorporate supporting catering and retail offers.
- A **strong education** offer, incorporating a learning centre with the potential for drawing in education visits from across the UK and from further afield. There is strong ambition to work in partnership with colleges, universities which will help to create a 'forum' for engaging with the public. It is felt that many of the serious academic institutions would welcome this public face.
- An **innovative landscaped greenspace**, alongside interpretation of the natural environment and of the growing renewable sector would be a central part of the offer.
- **Iconic public artwork** of national importance will help to draw in users and raise the profile of the project
- Working in partnership, there is a desire to incorporate a **skills and training offer** linked to the renewable energy sector providing opportunities for local residents and others and creating **new employment** opportunities. We have already researched renewables training opportunities in Scotland which are growing all the time.

The approach to the project concept by the 360 Steering Group has been shaped by wide-ranging and ongoing engagement with the local community. Consultation has taken place with stakeholders including the renewable energy companies and there is broad support for the need to study and understand climate change. The Scottish Government would be likely to be an enthusiastic participant as would the renewables generators. Some limited consultation has been carried out with Council Officers.

Partnership working and governance

The 360 Steering Group recognises that a partnership approach will be critical to the success of the project.

The 360 Group ambition is that the project is taken forward in partnership among the 360 Group, East Lothian Council, companies working in the renewable energy sector, training providers, education providers, the local community and others. Governance could take the form of a parent charity with a wholly-owned trading subsidiary operating the Centre with appropriately representative Board.

The market

The concept for the Centre is focussed on positive messaging about climate change and mitigation to drive positive change.

The market assessment demonstrates that there is a reasonable population base within a two-hour drivetime contour of the development site. Over 1 million residents live within 60 minutes drivetime of the site, and 70% of Scotland's population live in the Central Belt.

Site connectivity to the public and road transport networks is good with local access by both road and rail.

The size of the resident base level demonstrates the importance of visits generated from the tourism markets in East Lothian and Edinburgh.

It is recognised that there is an increasing need to provide training and skills development in the renewables sector. Training is in high demand as renewables-jobs expand.

Jobs and skills

Climate change skills, education and training opportunities are offered across Scotland by educational institutions, research providers, other organisations and the private sector. The 360 would be able with partnerships to focus entirely on this provision. Renewable energy companies have invested heavily in their own workforce training bases, designed to meet their needs. Academic institutions are responding with undergraduate and postgraduate awards based on sustainability, de-carbonisation and the green economy.

Revenue finance

As a National Centre for Climate Change, the 360 would be likely attract funding from a wide range of sources including Scottish and UK Government and the renewable sector, along with funding streams related to the educational offer, and visitor numbers and onsite spend relating to the public artwork and visitor attraction elements of the Centre.

The Centre would hope to achieve well over 200,000 visitors within the first years. This level of footfall is close to that achieved by the Scottish Seabird Centre and Dynamic Earth, which have significant levels of throughput. It is noted that these figures are conservative and are considerably less than those predicted for Eden North, which is currently under development in Dundee.

Challenges and risks

Similar to other transformational projects this one will face a number of challenges and risks. The former Cockenzie power station brownfield site is in the ownership of East Lothian Council.

ELC was successful in a bid to the Levelling Up Fund and has been granted £11.3m for development costs for site remediation. High level development costs for the Centre for Climate Change are estimated to be in the region of £29.5 million.

Cuts in public spending have changed the economic landscape radically. There is at present a high level of uncertainty in the marketplace. Emergency Budget Reviews have imposed cuts and restrictions on public spending. The available capital budgets of the Scottish Government and local authorities, key sources of grant funding have been squeezed. It is important to emphasise that the project is based upon partnership working with a range of organisations, including the renewables sector which is likely to continue to show positive growth in the immediate future.

Summary conclusion

It is submitted that the Vision and aspirations of the 360 Group are ambitious yet entirely achievable. These Visions and aspirations require a collaborative partnership approach.

A Centre for Climate Change would coalesce and grow around issues relating to social and structural changes required of society as a result of the Climate Emergency. It includes the provision of education and training in a growing marketplace. This is combined with a visitor attraction which includes large scale public artwork perhaps within a community park setting, looking out over the Forth and highlighting both the cultural and natural heritage of the area.

There are unknown factors relating to the site and the economy, alongside a number of risks set out in the main report. There are market challenges and potential competition for audiences and site users. However it is becoming increasingly clear across the world that the climate emergency is the most important and growing issue we are facing as the human race. Both the history of the site use and its location by the sea are particularly relevant to the climate change emergency.

Our community, our county & our country is poised to mobilise on climate change with deserving urgency – please join us and work to deliver The 360 Centre at Cockenzie.

The Right Place – the Right Idea – the Right time.

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