



EXETER
SCIENCE
PARK

Chief Executive Officer

Candidate Brief

October 2025

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Welcome from the Chair, Dr Eulian Roberts

Thank you for downloading our candidate pack to become the next Chief Executive Officer of Exeter Science Park. This should give you a good overview of the company, our culture and the role.

In August 2025, Exeter Science Park's Chief Executive, Dr Sally Basker, announced her decision to retire from full-time work in June 2026. Sally's leadership has been transformational. Her strategic vision, collaborative approach and unwavering commitment have laid the foundations for the Park's next phase of development.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvjDqAKvqF8>

Dr Sally Basker, who has led the organisation since 2017, leaves behind a powerful legacy. Under her leadership, Exeter Science Park has grown fivefold and now contributes approximately £50 million gross value add to the regional economy. Today, the Park is home to over 45 high-growth science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) businesses which employ over 750 staff.

Exeter Science Park is now preparing to enter its next chapter - seeking investment of up to £200m for the next significant phase of development that underpins our ambition to complete development by the late 2030's when we will host clients with a combined annual turnover of £350m and support up to 3,500 jobs on site.

This planned transition ensures continuity and stability as Exeter Science Park continues to play a key role in driving innovation-led economic growth across the region.

I hope many of you reading this will want to be part of our story and lead the park through its next phase of growth.

Welcome from the CEO, Dr Sally Basker

We've completed the first phase of the Science Park's development and the Park is in a strong position to move forward. Hence, this is a natural and timely moment to begin planning the next chapter.

What we have achieved is result of teamwork and I know you will enjoy the opportunity to work with our shareholders, Board, executive colleagues, partners, suppliers and clients.

You will also enjoy being part of our wider south-west community. The south west is a fantastic region, full of vibrant and innovative businesses, particularly in the STEMM sector, and it has been a privilege to have played a part in its development. On taking the position, I was welcomed to the business community and have been consistently inspired by its spirit of collaboration and ambition. The support for Exeter Science Park - and for me personally - has been unwavering, and I'm proud of the strong partnerships we've built across the region.

This is a great opportunity to make a defining contribution to the south-west's economy and society. I hope to meet you during the recruitment process. Good luck!

About Exeter Science Park Ltd

Exeter Science Park Ltd (ESPL) helps innovative STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Medicine) companies deliver extraordinary growth.

Incorporated in 2009, ESPL is owned by four shareholders: Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council and the University of Exeter. ESPL is a company limited by shares and the non-distribution clause in the shareholder agreement means any profits are reinvested to develop the park further. ESPL's shareholders have established Exeter Science Park to:

- **Stimulate economic growth:** The park was created to help the regional economy by developing high-value jobs and increasing productivity.
- **Support STEMM businesses:** The park's mission is to help STEMM businesses grow and create jobs.
- **Grow the knowledge-based economy:** The park was designed to stimulate and grow the region's knowledge-based economy.

ESPL celebrated the 10th anniversary of the completion of its first building, the Science Park Centre, in 2025. With state of the art offices and laboratories to rent as well as meeting rooms and event space to hire on our beautiful and well located park, we are building a growing community of like-minded businesses.

Exeter Science Park comprises around 70 acres of campus just to the east of Junction 29 of the M5 motorway in the south-west of the UK. ESPL works closely with its shareholders to develop Exeter Science Park with a Gateway Policy in place. Today:

- The 2009 outline planning permission is for gross floorspace not exceeding 76, 450 square metres of which around 25% has now been completed.
- 120,000 sq ft of office and laboratory space has been developed over the last decade, most of which is EPC A or EPC A+ (net zero for commercial property).
- ESPL provides a range of services including co-working desks, café and event space as well as 'conventional' office and laboratory space.
- ESPL continues to augment the amenities on site to establish ESPL as a destination. Most recently, this included the opening of the net zero *voco* Zeal Exeter Science Park hotel spring 2025. Its focus on innovation to

deliver through-life environmental sustainability is culturally well-aligned with the park and will add further value to the community and the wider economy.

- There are 45 companies now based at the park who employ around 750 people. They add around £50 million each year to the local economy.
- The companies work across multiple sectors: health and life sciences, net zero and the built environment, defence and security, engineering and advanced manufacturing, and digital commerce. Link [here](#) to the company profiles.

Sustainability and net zero

ESPL's ongoing commitment to sustainability helps its clients to achieve key sustainability benchmarks (e.g. B Corp) and to attract environmentally-conscious staff, partners and clients.

ESPL's latest buildings are EPC A+ for energy efficiency and BREEAM excellent; they are equipped with cutting-edge energy-efficient technologies, such as LED lighting, smart climate control systems, and advanced insulation. They are net zero for operational energy, allowing companies to reduce environmental impact and demonstrate their commitment to the environment.

Looking to the Future

ESPL is now embarking on to the next phase of its development with a number of strategic actions designed to attract investment and complete the next phase of the development of the park.

ESPL and its Shareholders are committed to completing development of the remaining 75% of the consented space by the late 2030s. When completed it will be an important economic anchor for the region with as many as 3,500 people working at the park with an anticipated combined annual turnover of up to £350million.

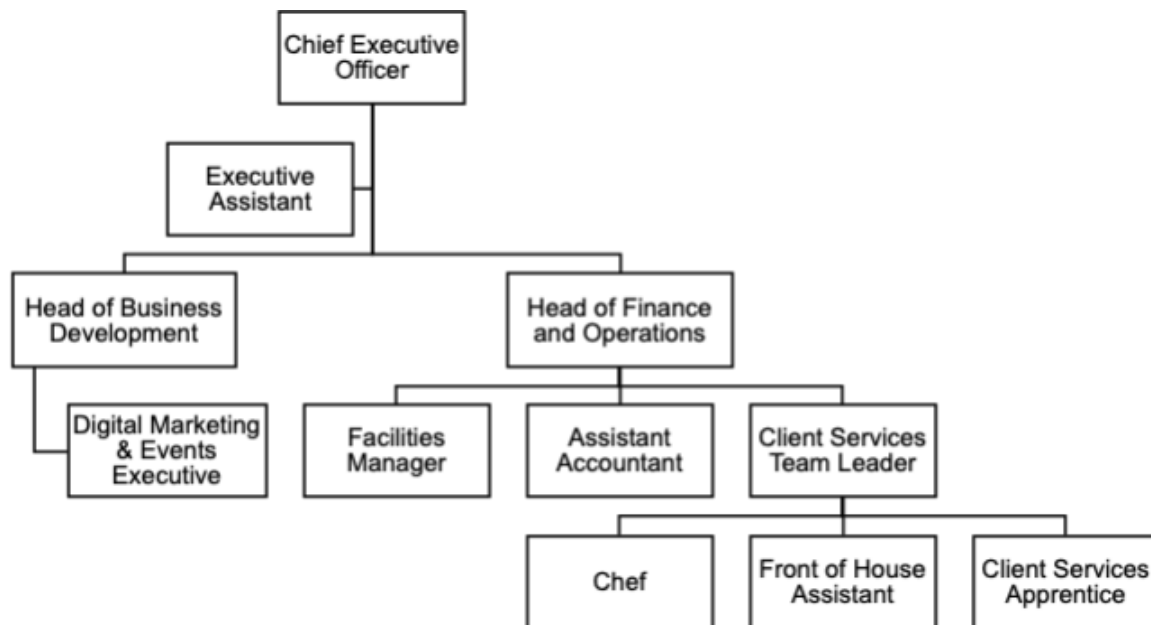
It will also continue to engage with the local community and seek to inspire students to choose STEMM subjects and welcome early and mid-career professionals to take up roles with companies based at the park.

It will continue to be a sustainability exemplar and support the region, and the country as a whole to reach its net zero targets.

ESPL is now working to simplify planning arrangements which will help it to seek new sources of investment to grow the park and enhance the wider region's economy.

The Executive Team

ESPL has a small core team supported by an extended team including a diverse and valued group of professional services, contractors and suppliers.



Core Values

Key values and behaviours run through ESPL's core and set out how we go about our business as well as the feeling our colleagues, clients, suppliers, contractors and all stakeholders get when engaging with ESPL. The core values are:

- **Entrepreneurial** - Having entrepreneurial spirit is key to our success and helps us to identify and exploit opportunities by balancing risk against reward, ultimately ensuring we are commercially viable.
- **Sustainability** – ESPL has exciting growth plans and community, environmental and financial sustainability are crucial for ensuring the longevity of the Science Park's impact and ensuring we are a responsible organisation.
- **Innovation** - ESPL helps innovative STEMM companies deliver extraordinary growth. Therefore it is essential that ESPL also thinks and acts innovatively, continually challenging what we do and how we do things to find better solutions, make us more effective and become more productive.

- **Professional** – Being professional and accountable for its decisions and actions ensures ESPL retains the confidence of its Board, shareholders and other stakeholders to make the right choices.
- **Integrity** – ESPL aims to do the right thing and balance the impact of our decisions against the needs of stakeholders and the wider community. We strive to build and maintain good relationships built on trust, openness, fairness and honesty.
- **Kindness** – Being kind to everybody we encounter at work – colleagues, clients, suppliers and other stakeholders brings about positive outcomes and experiences for all. It helps to make EPSL an enjoyable place to work, develops cohesion and generates an environment that enhances our ability to be entrepreneurial and presents us as an ethical organisation.
- **Teamwork** - As a small organisation with ambitious growth plans, we rely upon not only our internal team but a much broader team of external specialists. We can only achieve our strategic goals by working collaboratively so the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Annual Report

April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

The past year has been characterised by steady consolidation and strategic foresight, as Exeter Science Park marked its 10th anniversary and laid the foundations for its next phase of planned development.

As part of these preparations, in July 2024 Exeter Science Park Ltd restructured its finances, repaid its Growing Places Fund loan to the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and extinguished two loan facilities.

This was made possible by a £7.4 million investment from its shareholders - Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, and the University of Exeter - in the form of a debt-for-equity arrangement. This investment reflects the shareholders' continued commitment to the Science Park and its future growth. In addition, land contiguous to the existing site was purchased for £1.5 million in equity, further strengthening the company's balance sheet.

Exeter Science Park is now entering its next phase of growth, during which it will seek significant investment of between £150 million and £200 million to realise its long-term vision. We remain committed to completing the development by the late 2030s, with the ambition of supporting up to 3,500 jobs and generating £350 million in annual turnover.

To support this ambition, the Science Park is working in partnership with Devon County Council and East Devon District Council on a Local Development Order (LDO) for the Park. This will streamline the planning process, provide greater certainty, and reduce costs and delays for developers - enhancing the site's attractiveness to investors and enabling the efficient delivery of sustainable, innovation-led development.

A further benefit to future investors is the newly-opened *voco* Zeal Exeter Science Park, a net zero carbon hotel that launched in spring 2024. With a strong focus on innovation in its design, construction, and operations, the hotel is culturally well-aligned with the Science Park's sustainability goals and will add value to both the business community and the wider economy.

Exeter Science Park's event and conference space continues its growth trajectory, with a 22% increase in income. The café has seen higher footfall, driven by rising occupancy across the Park and more visitors from the local community. New companies are using the expanded event space, alongside repeat bookings from existing users and tenants. We anticipate that the new hotel will further drive demand for conferences and events in the year ahead.

Now home to 45 businesses and supporting over 750 jobs, Exeter Science Park offers flexible leases and tailored support that enable companies to scale effectively. Many have expanded their footprint within the Park, taking full advantage of the facilities on offer as well as the supportive ecosystem.

Exeter Science Park is now poised for further growth, aiming to create more high-value jobs through the provision of high-quality office and laboratory facilities - from 100 square feet for start-ups to several thousand square feet for larger companies - as part of our vibrant, STEMM-focused community.

Exeter Science Park has grown fivefold since 2017 and none of this could have happened without the knowledge, skills and experience of its board and executive team and we thank them for their dedication and commitment. In particular, we thank the five non-executive directors who departed in 2024 who have supported Exeter Science Park through a period of unprecedented change. We feel fortunate that we can welcome five new non-executive directors who will support our further growth.

However, there has been a succession plan in place since early 2023 for two key roles. My appointment as Chair at the start of July 2025 ended the first phase and we thank Nick Ames for his guidance and leadership as Chair over the last five years; and Sally Basker's retirement and the appointment of a new Chief Executive will conclude the second phase at the end of June 2026.

This succession plan enables a smooth transition and will ensure continuity and give confidence to our key stakeholders as we continue to focus on the delivery of long-term growth for the benefit of our wider region.

Job Description: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Location: Exeter Science Park, Exeter, UK

Reports to: Board of Directors

Contract Type: Permanent, Full-Time

Overview

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the strategic and operational leader of Exeter Science Park, responsible for driving its vision to both continue and further develop as a hub for innovation, research, and enterprise. This role requires a dynamic, commercially focused, and visionary leader who can foster collaboration between businesses, academia, investors, and local government to support STEMM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics, medicine) growth in the region. The right candidate will have the opportunity to make a significant and long-term contribution to the development of the region.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Develop and execute the Science Park's long-term strategy in alignment with its mission, vision, and goals.
- Work with partners to raise funds and complete development of Exeter Science Park by the late 2030s.
- Lead on the creation of an innovation ecosystem that supports high-growth within the STEMM sector.
- Identify emerging opportunities in STEMM to ensure the Science Park remains competitive and relevant.

Operational and Financial Management

- Oversee day-to-day operations, ensuring the Science Park is run efficiently, sustainably, and profitably.
- Lead financial planning, budgeting, and revenue generation through leasing, partnerships, grants, and investment.

- Ensure compliance with all statutory, legal, financial, and governance requirements.

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships

- Act as the primary ambassador and spokesperson for the Science Park to stakeholders, including local authorities, universities, investors, and the business community.
- Build and nurture strategic partnerships to attract innovative businesses and drive inward investment.
- Collaborate with regional and national economic development agencies to strengthen the Science Park's profile and to feed into regional strategies.

Business Development and Innovation Support

- Drive the development of partnerships including funders to complete development of Exeter Science Park by the late 2030s.
- Lead initiatives to attract and retain high-quality tenants and clients, particularly in the STEMM, and RT&D (research, technology and development) sectors.
- Foster a culture of innovation and provide support services that enable tenant companies to thrive.
- Develop programmes, events, and initiatives that position the Science Park as a leader in innovation and enterprise support.

Leadership and Team Management

- Provide inspirational leadership to the Science Park's team, ensuring high performance and professional development.
- Build a culture of collaboration, innovation, and accountability across the organisation.
- Recruit, retain, and motivate high-calibre staff aligned with the Park's strategic goals.

Key Skills and Competencies

- Proven senior leadership experience, ideally in STEMM, innovation, or property/estate management.
- Strong commercial acumen with a track record in business development, revenue generation, and partnership building.

- Excellent stakeholder engagement skills, with the ability to influence across business, academic, and public sectors.
- Strategic thinking combined with operational execution capability.
- Inspirational leadership and team-building skills.

Performance Measures

- Growth in occupancy and revenue of the Science Park.
- Successful attraction and retention of high-quality STEMM and RT&D companies.
- Strengthened partnerships with key stakeholders, universities, and local government.
- Demonstrable contribution to regional innovation and economic development.

Person Specification: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Qualifications

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Degree-level qualification in Business, Science, Engineering, or a related field		
Evidence of ongoing professional development and/or relevant leadership training		
Postgraduate qualification such as an MBA or MSc in Innovation/Leadership		

Experience

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Demonstrable experience in a senior leadership role with strategic and operational responsibilities, gained across a diverse range of organisations, including commercial environments and SMEs or micro-businesses.		
Proven track record of delivering measurable outcomes through strategic leadership.		
Proven track record in business development and revenue generation, ideally in an innovation or technology environment.		
Demonstrable skills and experience in programme management to successfully deliver business and/or infrastructure outcomes.		
Experience managing multi-stakeholder relationships, including partners from the public sector, academia and private sector.		
Experience of leading, motivating, and guiding teams within multi-stakeholder public and private sector environments (without direct line management responsibility).		
Experience with securing investment from UK public and private sector entities.		

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Leadership within a science, technology, or research-led organisation		
Experience managing commercial property, estates, or science park operations		
Demonstrated success in regional or national economic development projects		

Knowledge and Skills

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Strong commercial and financial acumen, including budgeting and resource management		
Excellent communication, negotiating and influencing skills with the ability to operate at Board level		
Understanding of the UK innovation and RT&D ecosystem, including universities, research councils, and government initiatives		
Ability to identify and capitalise on new innovation trends and investment opportunities		
Knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements for running a commercial and innovation-focused organisation		
Knowledge of property management, leasing, and tenant engagement in a commercial environment		
Knowledge of the South West business community, including its key organisations, sectoral strengths, and geographical differences		

Leadership and Personal Attributes

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Inspirational leader with the ability to motivate and develop a high-performing team		
Strategic thinker with the ability to translate vision into actionable plans		
Ability to quickly understand objectives, think creatively in unique or unfamiliar situations, and deliver positive outcomes.		
Resilient and adaptable, able to navigate complex multi-stakeholder environments.		
Effective and efficient at prioritising between complex and competing needs		
High levels of integrity, professionalism, and personal credibility		
Commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion as well as sustainability in business practices		
Established network within the UK STEMM, innovation and RT&D sector		

Additional Requirements

- Willingness to work flexibly, including occasional evenings and weekends, for events or stakeholder engagements.
- Ability and willingness to travel within the UK for networking, conferences, and stakeholder meetings.

Terms and Conditions

- Salary – £110,000 to £120,000 per annum depending on experience
- Annual leave - 28 days + bank holidays
- Free parking on site
- Employee assistance programme
- Workplace pension – employer pension contribution of 8%
- 4 x death in service benefits
- Discount on food and drink at the park
- Access to salary sacrifice schemes covering pensions, bikes and cars
- Annual discretionary bonus based on company performance

How to Apply

This process is being managed by [Jo Caine](#) of [Cathedral Appointments](#).

Please send your CV and a supporting statement to:

joanne@cathedralappointments.co.uk

In your statement, we'd love to hear about:

- What motivates you to apply for this role
- How your skills and experience match the key responsibilities

As a guide, your statement should be around two pages (A4) in length.

Selection Process and Timescales

Key Dates

- **Application Deadline** - 12 noon, Monday 3rd November
- **Screening and Preliminary Interviews with Cathedral Appointments** – 27th October – 13th November
- **Shortlist Notification** - Friday 28th November
- **First Interviews with ESPL** - Wednesday 10th December
- **Second Interviews with ESPL** - Thursday 8th January 2026

We'll keep you updated at each stage of the process so you know what to expect.

What to Expect in the Process

- **Psychometric Testing** - if you're shortlisted, you'll be asked to complete an assessment.
- **Right to Work (RTW) Checks** - we'll need to confirm your eligibility to work in the UK.
- **Qualification Checks** - we'll verify any qualifications relevant to the role.
- **Reasonable Adjustments** - please let us know if you require any adjustments to support you during the interview or in carrying out the role.
- **Declaration of Accuracy** – if shortlisted, you'll be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information you've provided is accurate.