



## **LEP agrees £14m investment to support 1,100 jobs 4Aug2020**

A £14.3m investment from the Government's Getting Building Fund (GBF) to stimulate post-COVID-19 recovery over the next 18 months will support £59m worth of projects and 1,100 jobs in Cornwall.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has agreed with Government a list of seven 'shovel-ready' projects spanning renewable energy, space, aerospace, creative industries, STEM skills and agri-food.

The following projects will share in £14.3m of GBF investment:

- Europe's first geothermal lithium recovery pilot plant to extract lithium for use in batteries. This project represents a £4m collaboration between Geothermal Engineering Ltd (GEL) and Cornish Lithium at GEL's deep geothermal project at United Downs to demonstrate that lithium can be produced from geothermal brines with a zero-carbon footprint.
- A space 'AI' institute and receiver factory at Goonhilly Earth Station. A £3.77m project led by Goonhilly Earth Station Ltd will involve commercial operators across sectors including space, data science, and high-performance computers as well as a consortium of leading universities to progress innovation in space-related artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, machine learning and advanced manufacturing. The investment will lead to manufacturing and specialist test facilities at Goonhilly for deep space, radio astronomy, and space telecommunication receivers for new and existing markets across the UK and internationally.
- Accelerated delivery of the £26.2m Hall for Cornwall redevelopment project in Truro which will include a 1,300-seat theatre, creative industries workspace, an extensive youth outreach programme and new bars and cafés. Audiences are projected to increase to over 300,000 a year, driving footfall in the city centre and contributing to a vibrant high street.
- The multi-million pound expansion of the Saputo Dairy UK creamery in Davidstow to increase production of cheese and demineralised whey powder for both the UK and export market, providing security for more than 330 dairy farmers across the region. The investment will reduce the environmental footprint of the dairy, including significant CO2 reductions.
- A £6.3m Truro and Penwith College STEM Skills Centre for North and East Cornwall, located in Bodmin next to the Callywith College campus. Providing post-16 education in health sciences, digital, engineering and manufacturing, including new T-levels.

- Workspace at Cornwall Airport Newquay. New hangar facilities for Cornwall Airport Ltd available to lease to businesses in the satellite and space sectors. The new £1.25m facility will support the UK Space Agency's decision to pick Newquay for horizontal satellite launches and create new rental revenue for the publicly-owned airport.
- A Cornwall-wide pilot project to retrofit social housing with renewable energy technology. A £4.07m Cornwall Council project that will include the installation of photovoltaic solar panels on 600 social homes, with a whole house retrofit of 42 properties.

The £14.3m GBF investment will attract a further £44.6m of public and private sector match funding, representing a total investment of almost £59m, supporting 1,100 jobs and furthering a number of Cornwall's green recovery ambitions around renewable energy technologies, geo-resources and sustainability.

Mark Duddridge, chair of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP, said: "We submitted an ambitious bid and have spent the last few weeks working with government and local partners to agree this first phase of strategic investment towards post-COVID-19 recovery.

"It combines world-leading innovation such as lithium extraction for batteries, space data analytics and advanced manufacturing, with new investment to accelerate growth in our renewable energy, agri-food, creative, and aerospace sectors. And we are investing in the future of Cornwall's young people, with a new STEM Skills Centre.

"Our economy has been one of the hardest hit by coronavirus and we will continue to work with government for more devolved funding so Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly can play a national role in the economic recovery."

The GBF investment has been welcomed:

Jeremy Wrathall, Founder and CEO of Cornish Lithium, said: "Cornish Lithium is delighted to be involved in this project alongside GEL given the potential to establish a new industry for Cornwall. The funding will significantly accelerate our work to demonstrate that lithium can be produced in a sustainable, zero-carbon, manner and will enable us to fast-track similar projects in other locations across Cornwall once the plant has been completed. We believe that Cornwall has the potential to become the "battery metals hub" for the UK, thus continuing a 4000 year history of metal production and industrial innovation."

Dr Ryan Law, Managing Director of Geothermal Engineering Ltd, said: "We have made significant strides in establishing the UK's first deep geothermal power plant in the UK. The possibility of developing future sites that include co-production of lithium extraction is very exciting and a great opportunity for both companies and Cornwall as a whole. We believe Cornwall's untapped natural resources are significant, and are delighted to be partnering with Cornish Lithium to maximise the synergies between the two technologies in order to unlock this potential."

Ian Jones, Chief Executive of Goonhilly Earth Station, said: “The Getting Building Fund will support a unique opportunity to bring together the important existing telecommunications assets at Goonhilly alongside investment in state-of-the-art testing and manufacturing. This is an important move forward in Cornwall’s ‘space’ journey developing new capabilities in invention, build and production for a growing global market. This will establish Goonhilly as the premier UK site for satellite receiver manufacture combined with innovation in artificial intelligence and machine learning.”

Councillor Andrew Mitchell, Cornwall’s cabinet member for homes, said: “This project involves fitting solar panels to 600 Cornwall Council homes, alongside whole house retrofits for 42 Council homes, expanding our recently announced 83 home Whole House Retrofit Innovation pilot. The planned upgrades, which will significantly reduce energy bills for Council tenants, represents an important further step in our plan to make the Council’s homes warmer and greener - a key priority of our ambitious climate emergency programme which we are accelerating as part of our Covid recovery plans.

The projects were chosen following strict government criteria around deliverability in the next 18 months, value for money and their fit with the LEP’s Local Industrial Strategy.

All LEPs and Combined Authorities in England were asked on June 10 by the Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP to submit a list of potential ‘shovel-ready’ projects by June 18 that could drive up economic growth and jobs.

The government confirmed in late June it had set aside £900m for local growth projects and called it the Getting Building Fund. Allocations to LEPs were announced on July 1 and all projects have been endorsed by the Housing Secretary.

