

Greener Industry Research Hub Planned for Hunterston

Peel Ports to team up with expert partners for pioneering projects to boost Scotland's sustainable economic future

Peel Ports today revealed its intention to join with expert partners in academia and ecology at its Hunterston site to research ways of achieving economic development while protecting the environment.

The plan follows the recent announcement of an £18m provision in the £250m Ayrshire Growth Deal Heads of Agreement for innovation at Hunterston Port and Resource Centre (Hunterston PARC),

A series of initiatives will develop and apply breakthrough methods at the site in collaboration with the University of Strathclyde, the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult and others.

Early work will focus on areas such as:

- How assets for floating offshore wind power generation can be built and served at Hunterston PARC
- How the efficiency and sustainability of decommissioning redundant oil and gas assets can be dramatically improved
- How new greener energy sources can be introduced to the National Grid.
- How innovative materials and techniques can be used to ensure that infrastructure development is sustainable and sympathetic to the natural environment. The intended 'Centre for Research into Ecology and Economic Development' will reach out to experts and communities, and involve North Ayrshire Council and Scottish Enterprise

Andrew Hemphill, Clydeport Port Director, Peel Ports said: "Our ambition for the Hunterston site is to create world-leading research and development in technologies of the future in areas such as energy, decommissioning, infrastructure and the environment. We are enthused that we will be collaborating with experts in engineering, science and ecology and other disciplines amongst our partners."

Professor Tim Bedford of the University of Strathclyde said: "We are excited to be involved. The mission for our engineers and scientists is clear - develop new techniques, leverage new research and find answers to some of the most important environmental and economic challenges faced by our generation."

Chris Hill, Director for Operational Performance at the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult said: "Hunterston PARC has a great deal to offer the offshore renewable energy sector and we look forward to developing options for the site to play a part in this booming Scottish industry"

Mark Newlands, Scottish Enterprise Head of Partnerships for the West of Scotland, said: "We are pleased that Hunterston PARC will become a centre for innovation in low carbon energy and the circular economy. This is a huge economic opportunity, not just for North Ayrshire but for Scotland as a whole, and we look forward to working alongside Peel Ports and its partners to enable economic development that goes hand-in-hand with good care of the natural environment."

Peel Ports is developing a new masterplan for the redevelopment of the 300-acre Hunterston PARC site over the next 20 years.

The site has the potential to transform Scotland's prospects in a variety of key sectors - providing jobs, skills development, import and export opportunities for decades to come.

Hunterston boasts a unique combination of assets, with extensive 300-acre brownfield land and infrastructure - which includes some of the deepest water in the UK, a mile long jetty and a rail head accessing the national network.

Hunterston PARC is central to the Ayrshire Growth Deal, the UK and Scottish Government-backed plan, which aims to bring transformational growth and 7,000 jobs to the region.