

Report to: Employment and Skills Committee

Date: 23 March 2023

Subject: **Green Jobs Taskforce Update**

Director: Phillip Witcherley, Interim Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture Directorate

Author: Michelle Hunter, Development Lead, Employment and Skills.

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the progress and next steps of the Mayor's Green Jobs Taskforce.

2. Background

- 2.1 West Yorkshire Green Jobs Taskforce brought together experts from business, education and training, the third and public sector and young people to identify what actions we can take as a region to deliver the skills and jobs needed to transition to a net zero carbon economy/region.
- 2.2 The Taskforce met four times, over a period of 18 months between October 2021 and February 2023. In addition, a number of online task and finish group meetings were held to deep dive into emerging key themes to support the development of deliverable actions in the form of recommendations.
- 2.3 At the final Green Jobs Taskforce, members agreed seven high level recommendations, they felt these were ambitious enough to achieve the objectives to meet net zero targets. Recommendations will position West Yorkshire as a leader and set out deliverable actions, underpinned by research and evidence, to deliver the skills and jobs needed to address the climate emergency.

- 2.4 Although the formal role of the Taskforce had concluded, the recommendations create bold ambitions that will transform the local economy. The recommendations will be underpinned by actions that will lead the way for the delivery of green jobs and more importantly, the development of skills needed to support individuals, educators and businesses embed the changes we need to create a lasting impact and achieve our regional objectives.

The current position in West Yorkshire

- 2.5 The work of the Taskforce gives West Yorkshire the opportunity to position itself as a leader in green skills and employment, enabling stakeholders to identify their role, helping to fulfil the Mayoral pledge to support green employment in the region.
- 2.6 Through a Green Jobs Pledge Campaign aimed at businesses to deliver the green jobs pledge. 1007 total job pledges have been received from 63 employers from across West Yorkshire. From those jobs pledged by businesses, 256 green jobs are currently 'in place' within the region.
- 2.7 As we develop our actions linked to the Taskforce recommendations to support our business community and the residents in West Yorkshire, this figure will undoubtedly rise. The mayor is in the process of writing to businesses who have pledged to create green jobs to see how our business support offer can contribute to making their pledge a reality.
- 2.8 There are currently a wide range of forecasts predicting the current and future demand for green skills. Although varied, each forecast shares the view that there will be tens of thousands of opportunities in West Yorkshire in the next decade. It is important we ensure that these opportunities are seized with the right policy interventions to support learners, employers, and skills providers.

Predictions for West Yorkshire's green economy:

- Meeting the UK Government's net zero target by 2050 could result in over 71,000 jobs in the low carbon and renewable energy economy in West Yorkshire by 2050 (LGA).
- Across West Yorkshire, 235,000 jobs could be affected by the transition to a net zero carbon economy, with around 119,000 workers in high demand because of their skills and experience, and 116,000 workers requiring upskilling and support.
- Modelling estimates that 680,000 homes will need retrofitting in order to achieve our net zero targets, domestic buildings are responsible for 26% of West Yorkshire's carbon emissions.

Taskforce progress to date

- 2.9 The Taskforce commissioned research with employers and young people to ensure that recommendations were based on evidence.

WPI Economics undertook research with employers and Ahead Partnership were commissioned to develop a 'Green Skills Youth Programme' to engage young people.

2.10 WPI economics, a data insight and public policy consultancy, were commissioned to undertake research to gain a clear picture of West Yorkshire's green economy, including its jobs, skills requirements, and relevant supply chains, with a forward look to future needs in these areas.:

2.11 Findings show:

- In 2020, 2% of online job postings were green, in 2022, that has increased to 6.9% and estimated jobs in West Yorkshire are expected to grow by 9,270 by 2030.
- Currently, the largest green policy areas are climate adaptation, green and professional research services and homes and buildings.
- West Yorkshire has 98,275 jobs in carbon intensive sectors (9.2% of WY employment) that will need to change substantially due to the transition.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion:
 - 13% of people in employment in West Yorkshire in the sectors highly exposed to transition are non-White versus 11% nationally.
 - National data suggests that the carbon intensive industries have relatively more male employees, with female workers accounting for only 23% of the employees and the ratio is similar for West Yorkshire.
- Under a central scenario, total employment in the green economy is expected to double between 2020 and 2030, with net growth across all the sectoral categories.

2.12 The Taskforce commissioned Ahead Partnership to deliver a 'Green Skills Youth Programme' engaging with young people on green skills to gain insight into their understanding and inspire them about the opportunities within the green economy.

Findings show:

- West Yorkshire Green Skills Youth Programme engaged with 174 young people from across Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Kirklees and Calderdale, aged 4-17 years old.
- Overall, the young people participating in this programme improved their understanding of the range of green jobs available across the region. The number of students that rated their understanding as excellent increased more than ten times between the start and end of the programme.

- The young participants also showed an increase in interest of pursuing a green job after the events with 82% more students stating they are interested in a green job.
- The students involved in this programme perceived green jobs as low paying, hard jobs. As well as this perception, the young people participating also acknowledged that a lack of understanding around the range of green jobs available would be a barrier for applying to one.
- The most popular methods of getting this information out to young people are via lessons, events, and talks within schools, as well as advertisements across a range of platforms including websites, social media and TV.
- According to the participating students, the positive environmental and social impact they could have in these roles would be a key focus to inspire and attract young people to green jobs, other than monetary incentives.

Development of recommendations

2.13 Members used their time to develop recommendations around key themes:

- Reviewing relevant labour market intelligence.
- Commissioning and reviewing research on the employment and skills needs for the green economy.
- Consulting with additional businesses and stakeholders on the recommendations and their delivery.
- Discussing how activity can be aligned to existing initiatives across the region.
- Developing partnerships that would make progress against the ambitions.
- Supporting the mayoral pledge to create 1,000 well paid green jobs.

2.14 Recommendations revolve around individuals, education and training providers and businesses. Creating a high skilled, future ready workforce requires policy interaction for all of them:

- Individuals – to access green careers advice and training options and job information and opportunities.
- Educators - support for the Further Education sector to build capacity respond to the green skills demand.
- Businesses - support for businesses to decarbonise via upskilling and reskilling.

2.15 At the last Employment and Skills Committee meeting in January, committee members endorsed the 7 recommendations:

Inspire and inform young people, from key stages 1 & 2, (age 4-19) onwards, about opportunities and career pathways within the green economy.

Facilitate easy access to green skills and job information, career pathways and job opportunities for young people and adults to make informed decisions.

Embed engagement of the target group when designing initiatives e.g. young people for the development of careers, education, information advice and guidance (CEIAG); workforce for reskilling/upskilling initiatives to support decarbonisation.

Support education and training providers to build a curriculum that responds effectively to the needs of businesses transitioning to a net-zero carbon economy; including building capacity to attract, develop and retain expert staff.

Enable businesses to access support to decarbonise and innovate as well as to attract, develop and retain talent to enable a just transition.

Strengthen current and potential West Yorkshire specialisms to stimulate demand and create green jobs, exploring opportunities in manufacturing, green finance and retrofit in the first instance.

Next Steps

- 2.16 The Taskforce has paved the way and galvanised experts from across West Yorkshire. The recommendations and actions set out will mean that green skills are central to the delivery of all existing and future skills and employment interventions in West Yorkshire.
- 2.17 The Taskforce recommendations will be published in Summer 2023 along with a report and action plan setting out how the region will achieve the ambitions in the recommendations.
- 2.18 Taskforce members, committee members and stakeholders from across the region will be invited to develop a robust action plan that sets out the actions to deliver the recommendations.
- 2.19 To accelerate and influence the work of the Taskforce work across the region, we need greater devolved powers across the wider skills system and multi-year sustainable funding and incentives for achieving net zero and nature recovery at regional and local levels. Giving local leaders the powers and funding, we need to invest in technology, including co-investment with the private sector and FE Capital funding to help us achieve net zero, and position the UK as a global leader with huge economic and environmental benefits.
- 2.20 In order to deliver recommendations at pace current thinking directs us to consider flexibility of existing programmes. For example, through the delivery of existing programmes and expertise, there is a genuine opportunity to create a regional and ambitious Green Skills Academy that would enhance and combine the Combined Authority's proven track record in delivering devolved skills programmes including Adult Education Budget, Free Courses for Jobs, and Skills Bootcamps. This would bring together existing provision and create

an umbrella for green skills simplifying the process for individuals to access green skills programmes.

- 2.21 A regional Green Skills Academy would support our ambitious net zero carbon economy target by creating a regional centre of excellence in environmental and sustainability training. This would include expertise around Retrofit, increasing the energy efficiency of our ageing housing stock and commercial buildings. Centres of expertise would support business transition giving employers access to green skills training for senior leaders and their staff.
- 2.22 The recommendations provide us with the opportunity to influence and progress, ensuring West Yorkshire is the best place to learn, work and live by developing opportunities to support business to thrive, enabling everyone to access quality training and support, and be prepared for and progress in work. Our ambitions also make a real contribution to the government's commitment to reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, but only if we put the right skills provision in place now.
- 2.23 Committee members are invited to be part of the task and finish groups and to share their thoughts on the proposed next steps.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The report outlines proposed interventions that will develop the skills and employment needs of individuals and businesses in West Yorkshire to tackle the climate emergency.
- 3.2 Recommendations will support the mayoral pledge to create 1,000 well paid, green jobs in West Yorkshire that will support the ambition to achieve net zero by 2038.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 The work of the Green Jobs Taskforce and the recommendations are directly linked to inclusive growth in that they contribute to readying West Yorkshire's business base and workforce for a transition towards a net zero economy and delivering on the Mayor's pledge to create 1,000 good, green jobs. Prioritising future ready skills and supporting businesses to decarbonise and benefit from the opportunities the green economy brings are vital to achieving a fair and just transition for the region.
- 4.2 Any specific activity considered in response to the high-level recommendations will take inclusive growth implications into account.
- 4.3 The Green Skills Youth Programme worked with a diverse range of over 170 young people. Participating schools were chosen to form a representative sample from across West Yorkshire and to provide insight from students from different backgrounds, both socio-economic and ethnic, and age groups.

4.4 A further workshop to engage young people on the final recommendations will engage young people from communities representative of the population of West Yorkshire.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 Generally, the skills and workforce pipeline work will consider the impacts of people in everything it does. By its nature, we are seeking to ensure that the skills offer the region has will enable everyone in the region, regardless of their background to have a thriving future. As we develop programmes for delivery, we will work to be explicit in targeting equality and diversity.

5.2 For green skills and jobs there is not currently a definite demographic picture for West Yorkshire. However, the research conducted by WPI Economics did find that green jobs are much more male dominated than the economy as a whole. The six occupations that have the greatest demand for green skills (construction project manager, civil engineer, electrician, electrical engineer, mechanical engineer & maintenance technician), 10% are female and 8% are ethnic minorities (compared to 13% of employment across all occupations).

5.3 In addition, 98,275 jobs in West Yorkshire are in sectors at risk of decarbonisation, that's 9.2% of total employment in 2020 (compared to 10.5% nationally). 13% of people in employment in those sectors highly exposed to transition are non-White versus 11% nationally. The ratio is the highest in Bradford (19%) and lowest in Wakefield (6%). While the green economy presents significant economic opportunities, some sectors and jobs will undergo significant change and may be at risk due to the transition towards net zero.

5.4 The final report by the Green Jobs Task Force will have a specific recommendation and actions addressing specific challenges around EDI.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 Small, medium and large business organisations, Local Authority senior officers, independent training providers, colleges and universities and young people.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the Committee note the update on the work of the Green Jobs Taskforce and comment on the considerations and next steps.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.