

Report to: Climate, Energy and Environment Committee

Date: 11 July 2023

Subject: **Green Skills and Employment Update**

Director: Interim Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture, Phil Witcherley

Author: Michelle Hunter, Employment and Skills Development Lead

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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 Committee members with an update on green employment and skills interventions as part of the pipeline of programmes developed for employment and skills and to support tackling climate emergency in West Yorkshire.
- 1.2 To seek the view of the Committee and their interest in further developing the green skills interventions.

2. Information

Background

- 2.1 The Employment and Skills Committee have overseen the development of the future pipeline and have prioritised investment in skills and training on digital and green skills, and employer support. This includes interventions that will reduce levels of digital exclusion, provide businesses with support to become more sustainable, support individuals with digital and green skills, support employers with talent acquisition, and people of all ages with a greater understanding of employment opportunities.

- 2.2 In January 2023 Climate, Energy and Environment Committee Members were supportive of the Green Jobs Taskforce recommendations but recognised the scale of the demand for skills across West Yorkshire.
- 2.3 Evidence and findings from the Green Jobs Taskforce (Appendix 1) detail the need to inspire and attract people to green jobs. Reaching young people through a range of educators is key to bringing learning to life through the curriculum and bridging the gap between education and employment. Enabling businesses to have access to talent and skills programmes that upskill their workforce will support them to become more sustainable.
- 2.4 Meeting the Government's net zero target by 2050 could result in over 71,000 jobs in the low carbon renewable energy economy in West Yorkshire. 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.
- 2.4 Ensuring a skilled workforce and clarity around the existing skills landscape also helps to attract and retain investment from employers that can strengthen our regional economy. Employers must be supported to retrain, retain, and attract talent for in-demand skills, ensuring businesses can implement digital and green solutions and transition to net zero. As such, a robust skills support package is an essential intervention.
- 2.5 Evidence from this committee and the Green Jobs Taskforce have been used to develop interventions and skills packages.

Skills Packages

- 2.6 A £7.5m package of employment and skills interventions have been prioritised for development, the funding is made up of £6.5m of gainshare funding from Investment Priority 2 - skills and training for people and £1.5m decommitted from the existing employment and skills budget.
- 2.7 Skills packages developed aim to offer complementary activity to existing skills offers in the region with a focus on supporting individuals to acquire skills needed to gain employment in the digital sector and sectors requiring green skills. Skills packages build on the success of previous programmes and support employers to create talent pipelines and access retraining and upskilling opportunities for their existing workforce as well as attracting new talent needed to meet ambitious net zero targets.
- 2.8 Creating skills programmes that can be scaled up and respond to changes within the labour market provides greater opportunities to address the long-term green skills needs and growing demands.

2.9 The following green employment and skills interventions were approved at the Combined Authority meeting in June.

Workforce Development and Growth

- **Digital and green skills offers for businesses** - including support for job creation, aligned to the mayoral pledge to create 1,000 green jobs for young people.
- **Mayor's SME graduate pilot programme** – a programme designed to increase the uptake of employment within employers by graduates in West Yorkshire.
- **Regional skills support for employers** – including a skills funding offer to support businesses to digitise and become more sustainable.

Workforce for the Future

- **Digital inclusion** – ensuring all those across the region are supported in the acquisition of digital skills.
- **Regional careers campaigns** – aimed at key areas like Digital & Green
- **Green skills engagement with young people from primary age** – in order to encourage the development of understanding and aspirations around green careers.
- **A further education development fund** - including test and learn pilots for green skills.
- **Digital Workforce for the Future** - employer led inspiration activity aimed at young people to promote the take up of digital skills with a focus on engaging underrepresented groups.

2.10 Data and intelligence clearly illustrates that demand for skilled workers is impacting quality recruitment, staff retainment and productivity (state of the region 2022). The Combined Authority have responded by creating a Digital Skills, Green Skills and Skill Support for Business Programme that will:

- Engage 10,000 businesses to interact with and skills and training opportunities through marketing campaigns and partnerships.
- Work with 50 SMEs to create graduate opportunities.
- Engage 1,000 businesses to access skills support and create workforce development plans.
- Support a minimum of 150 and a maximum of 600 SMEs to access skills funding to develop skills and training for their workforce.
- Encourage SMEs to create 1,000 well paid green jobs for young people.
- Support businesses to create green and digital jobs.
- Alignment and enhancement of business support programmes e.g. Business Sustainability West Yorkshire.

- 2.11 The programme was approved at the Combined Authority Board on 22nd June and will be further developed in partnership with local, internal, and external stakeholders on the design throughout summer with delivery from September 2023.
- 2.12 As a cross-cutting theme on the Climate, Energy and Environment agenda, this programme could support the progress on other programmes such as the delivery of the Better Homes and Business Sustainability West Yorkshire.
- 2.13 Putting the right policy interventions in place now will allow our regional organisations and education providers to establish the right provision to meet future demand. Skills packages can be scaled up should additional funding become available. They provide a responsive and flexible approach giving confidence to businesses, supporting them to attract and retain talent and support individuals to transition to a net zero economy.

Next Steps

- 2.14 We would like committee's steers on how to develop and deliver the proposed skills packages.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The interventions in this report are designed to address the employment and skills needs identified to address climate emergency implications.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 All delivery linked to programmes will be aligned to inclusive growth, procured suppliers commissioned to delivery activity through the programme will be required to demonstrate a commitment to implementing social value objectives throughout the life of the programme and projects.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The programmes will use existing business support, enterprise programmes and skills programmes to benchmark and develop EDI targets.

6. Financial Implications

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

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 Ethical and legal considerations, rules and regulations, and timescales within which the project must be delivered have all been considered and deliberated upon.

8. Staffing Implications

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

9. External Consultees

9.1 Employment and Skills Committee, local authority and wider stakeholders have been consulted on the proposals in this paper

10. Recommendations

10.1 Committee members are asked to share views and comment on the outlined approach.

10.2 Committee members are asked to express their interest in further consultation on the refinement of the delivery plan for the green skills offer for business.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Green Jobs Taskforce Recommendations

Appendix 2 – [Programme Breakdown](#)