



Report to:	Employment and Skills Committee
Date:	19 October 2023
Subject:	Skills Support for Business
Director:	Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Director of Inclusive Economy, Skills, and Culture
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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 share the Mayor's Green Jobs Taskforce final report and seek the Committee's endorsement for the report and its recommendations for action
- 1.2. To provide an update and share final reporting to the Committee on the Skills for Growth programme
- 1.3. To update the Committee and seek members' views on new and developing skills support for businesses, and opportunities for co-development
- 1.4. The report also provides an update on Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and Fair Work Charter.

2. Information

Context

- 2.1 The latest available data from Employer Skills Survey 2022 shows that although the value of employer investment in training is substantial, the incidence of training among West Yorkshire employers has fallen since 2019 and is below the national average. At the same time employers face an increased prevalence of skill shortage vacancies

(characterised by a lack of job applicants with the required skills) particularly in sectors like Construction. The proportion of employers affected by skills gaps, where existing staff lack full proficiency, has also grown, as has the number of staff affected by gaps. Further detail of this analysis is provided in the appendix to this paper.

Green Jobs Taskforce

- 2.2 The Combined Authority has declared a climate emergency and has set an ambitious target for the region to be net-zero carbon by 2038, with significant progress by 2030. There is recognition that achieving the target will unlock significant economic benefits such as good, green jobs (71,000 potential jobs across West Yorkshire according to the LGA).
- 2.3 In August 2021, Mayor Tracy Brabin announced early action to drive the structural changes required to transition to a net zero carbon economy and deliver inclusive, sustainable growth with the creation of a Green Jobs Taskforce. Key partners from business, education and training and the third and public sectors worked together to position the region as a leader and set out recommendations, underpinned by evidence and actions, to deliver the skills and jobs needed to address the climate emergency and achieve the mayoral pledge to create 1,000 well-paid (real living wage), green jobs for young people (aged 18-30).
- 2.4 In [January](#), the Employment and Skills Committee endorsed and adopted the recommendations of the Green Jobs Taskforce. At the [March meeting](#), the Committee received a wider progress report from the Green Jobs Taskforce, including considering findings of the commissioned research and endorsing the seven recommendations revolving around individuals, education and training providers and businesses. This was followed by task and finish group meetings with committee members and a wide range of stakeholders to develop a corresponding action plan. A summary timeline of Taskforce activity can be seen below:



2.5 In line with the Combined Authority's Employment & Skills Framework, which identified net-zero carbon as a cross cutting theme and the West Yorkshire Investment Plan, delivering on the recommendations and actions outlined in the Green Jobs Taskforce Report will build expertise, capacity and capability across the region's current and future workforce to ensure it is able to service the transition to a sustainable, net-zero carbon and climate resilient economy.

2.6 The work of the Taskforce identified the following key challenges for individuals, education and training providers and businesses:

- Businesses face challenges to decarbonise, including a lack of skills and knowledge within their existing workforce. WPI Economics' research uncovered that West Yorkshire has 98,275 jobs in carbon intensive sectors (9.2% of the region's employment) that will fall substantially due to the transition, so there needs to be a particular focus on those that stand to lose most as a result of the shifting economy. Conversely, there are currently just over 73,000 jobs in the region estimated to be green. Projections show that doubling of employment is expected in the next decade

under central scenarios, which assumes that necessary progress is made towards the achievement of net zero.

- Further and higher education and private training providers face challenges around capital investment in facilities and equipment needed to deliver green skills training and the attraction and retention of teaching talent to fundamentally change their curricula and course offer.
- Barriers to the update of green skills on an individual level include a lack of awareness and understanding about green skills, career options and pathways.

2.7 The Green Jobs Taskforce report created a set of ambitious recommendations and identifies policy interventions for action to support businesses, individuals, educators and to maximise opportunities and minimise identified challenges of our future green economy.

2.8 Key to achieving the Taskforce's recommendations will be a package of Digital Skills, Green Skills and Skills Support for Businesses interventions approved by the Combined Authority in June 2023 to support:

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

2.9 The final report of the Green Jobs Taskforce can be found in Appendix 1.

2.10 To celebrate the success of the Taskforce, Baroness Blake and the Mayor, Tracy Brabin, hosted a Green Skills Revolution Dinner (sponsored by SSE) at the House of Lords on Thursday 14th September. Attendees included people from the third sector, education, and private sector and an Apprentice who is training to become a Transport Planner through Leeds College of Building and is employed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

2.11 A local celebratory event is being planned to launch the report and showcase the work of the Taskforce. West Yorkshire is the first region in the UK to create a Taskforce prioritising green jobs, skills, and training, enabling stakeholders to identify their role and to work in partnership and collaboration to achieve our ambitions for a net-zero economy.

2.12 The Combined Authority is committed to continuing the strong relationships that have been built through the Taskforce to work in partnership to co-design, implement and deliver new offers to support business co-investment in skills.

Skills for Growth

- 2.13 The part ESF supported Skills for Growth programme delivery period ended on 31 August 2023. The programme has been highly successful and achieved all targets despite underspending on marketing.

An outline of the targets can be found below:

KPI	Target	Actual (September 2023)
Businesses Supported CO23	351	533
Projects Completed R9	281	284
Participants 01	1550	3296

The achievements of the programme show the level of demand from businesses for a skills advisory service. Final projects are being audited and signatures collected, the final figures will be available shortly. The team are currently working with an external evaluator 'Thrive Economics' to evaluate the success of the programme. This will be presented to the committee in the new year.

Digital and green skills and Skills Support for Businesses

- 2.14 In June, the Combined Authority approved a £6.6m programme of interventions to support green and digital skills and skills support for businesses. This resource will be crucial to realise the ambitions of the Green Jobs Taskforce.
- 2.15 Interventions will be delivered between September 2023 and March 2026. This programme enhances core activity where funding was due to come to an end and allows the Combined Authority to commence delivery of new outcomes and pilot new approaches in line with its strategic priorities. In summary the support package includes:

Advisory Service – The team (made up of 8 advisers and a project lead) that delivered the Skills for Growth programme will be deployed to deliver the new programme. Fully integrated with wider business support and LA teams, they will provide impartial advice to businesses to support them to create a pipeline of talent through referrals to employment and skills interventions and engagement with education. This new service will build on the successes of the previous programme, and discussions are underway with local authorities and other key partners to ensure complimentary with local structures and ways of working. The new interventions have an overall target to reach 1,000 businesses between September 2023 and 2026.

Employer Skills co-investment – £1.5m has been allocated to support green jobs and the skills required for digital transformation and carbon reduction. This project will be co-designed and developed over the coming months in collaboration with businesses and other key partners.



Mayoral Graduate Pilot – extensive consultation was undertaken with stakeholders as part of the business case. The programme will be commissioned over the coming months with a view to recruiting in May and Oct 2024.

Consultation and Next Steps

- 2.16 The Mayor of West Yorkshire is keen to hear from businesses and intermediaries about their skills challenges, and how to encourage co-investment in skills. The Mayor will convene key partners over the coming months to shape the future offer and route to market.

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)

- 2.17 Local Skills Improvement Plans are a process that brings together the employer voice to address the significant economic changes anticipated over the next years so that where possible the skills system can adapt and align with employers' needs.
- 2.18 It is widely recognised that coordinating an impartial employer voice is paramount to develop a robust and growing labour market with a good support of fair work, the levers and funding models that bind the skills system do not always allow a fully regional and responsive approach. In spite of this, there have been some good examples through devolved funding where this has happened through adult skills commissioning.
- 2.19 The West Yorkshire LSIP has been led by West and North Yorkshire Chambers and has now been published and is available [LSIP West Yorkshire 2023.pdf \(wnychamber.co.uk\)](https://www.wnychamber.co.uk/LSIP_West_Yorkshire_2023.pdf)
- 2.20 West Yorkshire Combined Authority and its partners are well placed to take forward many of the recommendations in the action plan and through the work of this Committee has developed a pipeline of projects that will ensure the effective delivery of the ambitions in the plan for example the new Skills Support for Employers programme will provide impartial skills advice to businesses.

Fair Work Charter

- 2.21 A key shared regional ambition is to ensure a fair and just economy. This includes the Mayor's electoral pledge to develop a Fair Work Charter that enables collaboration with - and celebration of - our region's employers to help ensure West Yorkshire's workers receive the greatest possible security, best working conditions, as well as promoting greater employee wellbeing, workforce diversity, social mobility, and so accelerate Inclusive Growth
- 2.22 Over the last two years, extensive development including identifying different options for development of the charter which the Committee were consulted on, a steering group made up from business representative organisations, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE), NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB), Yorkshire Universities and key

national stakeholders, employee / union representation (TUC and GMB) and chaired by the LEP Board's former Diversity Champion, Kate Hainsworth oversaw the development, consultation analysis of responses, and final Charter.

- 2.23 The Fair Work Charter is distinctive to West Yorkshire and is a trust-based rather than compliance checking approach which will be quality assured through spot-checking, accessible whistle-blowing protocol and light touch 1:1 annual review.
- 2.24 New programmes such as Skills Support for Employers will be aligned to the Fair Work Charter and address the challenges raised by businesses.
- 2.25 A website hosting best practices will be built over the next few months, and a launch event supported by a marketing campaign will live in Autumn 2023. An early impact assessment of the Charter will be undertaken in 2024.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1. The Green Jobs Taskforce report outlines proposed interventions that will develop the skills and employment needs of individuals and businesses in West Yorkshire to tackle the climate emergency. Recommendations will also 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 2030.

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. The Taskforce engaged with over 300 young people to develop the recommendations.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1. The final report by the Green Jobs Task Force has a specific recommendation and actions addressing specific challenges around EDI. An EqIA Stage I and II have been prepared as part of the project.

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 were involved in the development of the Green Jobs Taskforce report.

10. Recommendations

10.1. Members of the Committee are asked to endorse and adopt the final report of the Green Jobs Taskforce.

10.2. Members are asked to note the final report from Skills for Growth programme, development of the Fair Work Charter and published West Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan

11. Background Documents

Employment & Skills Committee 23 January 2023:

- [Item 9 - Employment and Skills Development and Future Delivery.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Employment & Skills Committee 23 March 2023:

- [Item 6 - Green Jobs Taskforce.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

12. Appendices

[Appendix 1 – Green Jobs Taskforce Report](#)

[Appendix 2 – Evidence Base](#)