



Green Jobs Taskforce

Recommendations Report



September 2023

**West
Yorkshire**
Combined
Authority

 **Tracy Brabin
Mayor**
of West Yorkshire



Foreword

Here in West Yorkshire, we have a bold ambition to create a brighter region that works for everyone.

Crucial to realising this vision is ensuring everyone has access to the skills they need to get on, live a healthy, happy and fulfilled life with a good, well-paid job.

We're not afraid to take on challenges – and arguably, the climate emergency is the biggest threat we face today. And this is on top of the worst cost-of-living crisis most of us have ever lived through.

In West Yorkshire, we are working towards creating a net zero carbon region by 2038 at the latest, with significant progress by 2030. This presents us with a unique, once in a generation opportunity to transform our economy and reap the benefits this will bring.

This will require a massive shift in the structure and activity of our economy, and we must ensure we make these changes in a fair way which means everyone in our region benefits.

Prioritising good, green jobs, and investing in skills and training for young people to do them have been some of my key pledges as Mayor for our region. Both will be vital to achieve our commitment to a fairer, more productive and prosperous West Yorkshire.

This is why, I created the West Yorkshire Green Jobs Taskforce, bringing 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 and create 1000, well-paid, green skilled jobs for young people.

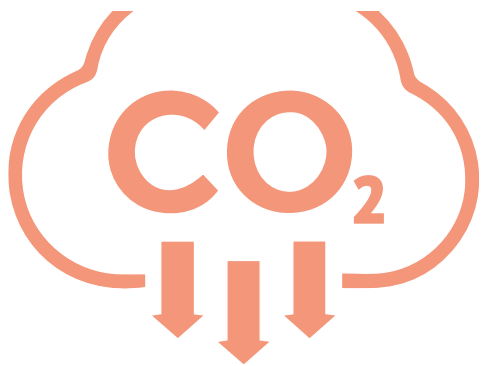
This report provides the leadership we need to make the right changes now, backed up by a wealth of evidence to bring together a plan for a brighter future for all.



Mayor Tracy Brabin

Mayor of West Yorkshire
Chair of the Green Jobs Taskforce





Executive summary

Over the coming years and decades, West Yorkshire has the potential to create thousands of good jobs in the zero-carbon economy.

To be able to seize this opportunity, we need to create a future-ready workforce of people with the right skill sets and our education and training provision must quickly pivot to the needs of a zero-carbon economy.

The region has an important role to play in driving the structural changes needed to transition to a net zero carbon economy and deliver inclusive, sustainable growth. It is vital that we support businesses and people in our region to be resilient and innovative while securing the investment needed to deliver long-lasting change.

The Green Jobs Taskforce was created to set out recommendations, supported by research, to deliver the skills and jobs needed to address the climate emergency and deliver the mayoral pledge to create 1,000 well-paid, green jobs for young people.

Our underpinning strategy for this work is the Employment and Skills Framework, focusing on bridging the gap between education and employment, creating a culture of investment in the workforce, driving innovation and productivity through high level skills.

The Taskforce has brought together a diverse range of stakeholders from across the region who have collectively shared their expertise to create solutions and recommendations.

Whilst skills are integral to the delivery of this strategic aim, there are a wide range of forecasts predicting the current and future demand for green skills and jobs. Although varied, each forecast shares the view that there will be tens of thousands of opportunities in West Yorkshire in the next decade with the right policy interventions and support in place.

The recommendations in this report identify the key areas for policy intervention to maximise opportunities and address skills needs now so that young people have the pathways to secure skilled green jobs in the future and so that the existing workforce, in those sectors most at risk from the transition towards a net zero economy, have the ability to upskill or retrain.

Recommendation summary

Inspire and engage individuals

Easy access to green career advice, training options, upskilling, reskilling and jobs.



Support educators

Support the education sector to build capacity in response to green skills demand.



Future-ready businesses

Support businesses to decarbonise, transition their workforce and attract and retain talent.



Who is the Green Jobs Taskforce

Chaired by Mayor Tracy Brabin, the Green Jobs Taskforce brought together experts from business, educators, including further and higher education and private training providers, the third and public sector and young people.

Bringing experts together



Impact and progress

The Taskforce was convened by Mayor Tracy Brabin in January 2022 and met four times over a period of 12 months.

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.

The result

The result is an ambitious set of evidence-led recommendations with an emerging delivery plan positioning West Yorkshire as a leader to deliver the skills and jobs needed to address the climate emergency and achieve the mayoral pledge to create 1,000, well-paid, green jobs for young people.



Why green skills are important for West Yorkshire

With radical future changes to the economy come opportunities and new high skilled jobs but also uncertainty and risk, in particular for those carbon-intensive jobs most exposed by decarbonisation.

West Yorkshire's position

- 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 (Local Government Association).
- Across West Yorkshire, estimates show up to **235,000** jobs could be affected by the transition to a net zero carbon economy. Around **119,000** workers may be in high demand because of their skills and experience, while **116,000** workers may require 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.



Putting the right policy interventions and support in place now will allow our regional organisations and programmes and in particular our education and training providers, to establish the right training provision to meet future demand and provide confidence to our business base to upskill and re-train staff as part of the transition to a net zero economy.



Green employment

In line with the national UK Green Jobs Taskforce, West Yorkshire Combined Authority uses the government's definition of green employment:



‘Employment in an activity that directly contributes to – or indirectly supports – the achievement of West Yorkshire’s net zero emissions target and other environmental goals, such as nature restoration and mitigation against climate risks.’



Headline findings

Research was commissioned by the Taskforce to gain a clear picture of West Yorkshire's green economy, including its jobs and skills requirements with a forward look to future needs.

73,400 green jobs

There were an estimated **73,400** green jobs in West Yorkshire in 2021. Currently, the sectors with the largest number of green jobs are power, homes and buildings and green professional and research services. This accounts for **7%** of all jobs, higher than the UK average of 6%.

98,275 carbon intensive jobs

West Yorkshire has **98,275** jobs in carbon intensive sectors – (**9.2%** of the region's employment versus 10.5% nationally) – that will need to change substantially due to the transition.

13% of people non-white

More male employees than female

13% of people in employment in West Yorkshire in the relevant roles are non-White versus **11%** nationally. Both Nationally and at a regional level there are more male employees than female in relevant sectors - **23%** in West Yorkshire.

Green employment expected to double

Total employment in the green economy needs to **double** between 2020 and 2030 in order to put West Yorkshire on the path to net zero.

Headline findings

Our Green Skills Youth Programme consulted with young people to gain insight into their perceptions and views on green skills and careers.

Engaged with 214 people

West Yorkshire **Green Skills Youth Programme engaged** with **214** young people from across Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield, aged 4–17 years old.

Increased and advanced understanding

The number of students that rated their understanding of the range of green jobs available across the region as excellent increased more than **ten times** between the start and end of the programme.

82% increase in interest

82% of the **214** engaged students showed an interest in pursuing a green job after the programme.

Lack of knowledge a barrier

The students involved in this programme perceived green jobs as low paying, hard jobs. The young people participating also acknowledged that a lack of knowledge about the range of green jobs available would be a barrier to applying to one.

Environmental and social impact a focus

According to the participating students, the positive environmental and social impact they could have in these roles would be key aspects to focus on to inspire and attract young people to green jobs, other than monetary incentives alone.

Research themes

Based on the evidence, learnings, and findings from the research as well as wider conversations with stakeholders, the Taskforce has developed a series of practical recommendations and an action plan based on key themes, **individuals, educators and businesses.**



Key points

Recommendations focus on individuals, education and training providers and businesses. Creating a high skilled, future ready workforce requires policy interaction between all of them.

Businesses face challenges to decarbonise, including a lack of skills and knowledge in their existing workforce to meet these challenges. There are also a number of sectors which are particularly exposed, such as energy intensive manufacturing businesses, retrofit, through the sheer scale of action required, and green finance, because of its potential to leverage investment into the transition.

Further and higher education and private training providers require support to pivot their curricula and course offer so people can develop the right skills to fill current and future green jobs. Key challenges identified included capital investment in facilities and equipment needed to deliver green skills training and the attraction and retention of teaching talent.

Key challenges identified for individuals were the creation of a talent pipeline, equipping young people with the right skills for the future labour market and the need to upskill and reskill the existing workforce who will need to adapt with their employers to a transforming economy. Barriers to the uptake of green skills are a lack of awareness and understanding about green skills, career options and pathways.

Research themes



This infographic visualizes the relationship between the research findings, emerging priorities and recommendations.

Recommendations

Inspire



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

Facilitate



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

Embed



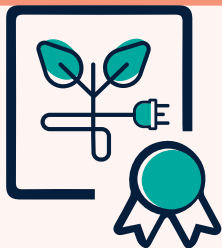
Embed engagement of the target group when designing initiatives e.g. young people for the development of careers, education, information advice and guidance (CEIAG); workforce for reskilling/upskilling initiatives to support decarbonisation.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Any interventions put forward must have ambitious targets addressing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); particularly around attracting more women and people from Black, Asian ethnic minority (BAME) backgrounds towards careers within the green economy and the workforce most exposed by a transition to net-zero.

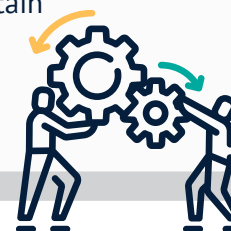
Support



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

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



Strengthen

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.



Action Plan

Individuals

Give every young person access to green skills careers information advice and guidance through the Combined Authority's Go Green resources.

Provide free training for adults to meet demand for green skills and jobs.

Support the development of a sustainable regional transport network that helps to break down social mobility barriers, improve access to employment and training opportunities.

Deliver a pilot scheme with 130 West Yorkshire primary schools that engages and inspires young people to understand green careers.

Educators

Establish a regional centre of excellence in environmental and sustainability training that upskills individuals and supports business leaders and their employees.

Work with Leeds College of Building to create a regional retrofit advisory board that will engage experts, housing partners and the further education sector to work towards increasing the energy efficiency of housing and commercial buildings.

Develop technical education qualifications with the Department for Education and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education that address skills gaps.

Strengthen the Green Jobs Taskforce partnership to develop a strategic response to the supply and demand issues.

Businesses

Support high carbon sector businesses, such as transport and housing, to give them access to skills support, training and funding.

Create a pilot scheme to assist businesses to recruit graduates into green job vacancies.

Work with the Government to build a stronger further education sector that delivers the green skills needed for our transitioning economy.

Put creating new green jobs and developing skills at the heart of all new West Yorkshire Combined Authority infrastructure projects.

Conclusions

The recommendations set out in this report by the Green Jobs Taskforce will create a future-ready workforce, ready to reap the benefits of a brighter, more aspirational net zero future.

We have galvanized experts from across West Yorkshire to develop our plan which will place green skills at the centre of our ambition to create a net zero carbon region.

Through our work we are leading the way, lowering barriers and pushing for change in a complex landscape.

And this also provides an evidence base for our region and others to call for more devolved powers across skills and employment and net zero and the environment as well as, housing, transport, culture, policing and crime.

We need a greater role in planning and preparing for our future economy, supporting our residents to upskill and reskill, our businesses to decarbonise and ready their workforce, and enable our education and training providers to invest in buildings, equipment, facilities and human capital so their offer aligns with the local labour market's current and future green skills demands.

Partners and stakeholders in the region are crucial contributors in delivering our ambitions and it is only through collaboration that we will be able to deliver on our recommendations.

Although the work of the Green Jobs Taskforce has concluded, our work here is not finished.

We have a bold ambition to transform our economy and capitalise on the benefits of the transition to a net zero West Yorkshire; improving opportunities for everyone in our region is what drives us forward.

Let's be the change we want to see. With our shared purpose we can make a lasting impact and pave the way for green skills and employment by providing our workforce, businesses and educators with the right skills and means to thrive within a net zero carbon economy.





Find out more

westyorks-ca.gov.uk

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