

## LOW CARBON HUB BOARD

**Date:** 03rd October 2017

**Subject:** LOW CARBON/ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION AND SKILLS

**Report of:** Cllr Travis, Deputy Chair Low Carbon Hub Board

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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Board on issues pertaining to the delivery of low carbon and environment education and skills programmes in Greater Manchester.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board is requested to:

- Note the report
- Note the intention of GM Asst. Director Skills to build upon the opportunities that are currently across GM to promoting green skills and explore specific interactions with the GM Environment sector
- Note the opportunity to develop a natural environment skills programme which will be presented to the GM Natural Capital Group

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|---|-------|---------------|
| <b>TRACKING/PROCESS</b>   |       |               |
| Does this report relate to a Key Decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution or in the process agreed by the AGMA Executive Board                     |       | No            |
| <b>EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN</b>   |       |               |
| Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the AGMA Scrutiny Pool on the grounds of urgency? | NA    |               |
| AGMA Commission   | TfGMC | Scrutiny Pool |
| 03rd October 2017   | NA    | NA            |

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

1.1 At the last Low Carbon Hub Board meeting, following a presentation from Manchester Environment Education Network (MEEN), a discussion was held on the need for greater awareness of environmental issues in schools, universities and organisations. It was noted that a number of GM Climate Change and Low Emission Strategy (CCLES) actions pertaining to skills were continuously failing to be delivered. Cllr Travis agreed to Chair a further meeting on this topic to explore the issues and opportunities for increasing awareness. This report summarises the discussion and outcomes of that meeting.

1.2 A meeting was held on 12<sup>th</sup> September and included representatives from LCH Board, Carbon Literacy, MEEN, Natural Capital Group, SERA, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, GMCA, University of Manchester and NUS. Apologies were received from Oldham College and University of Salford.

## **2.0 GAPS AND BARRIERS**

2.1 Following Introductions, a review of the Skills actions in the CCLES was undertaken. It was noted that the original actions had been lead by the Chamber of Commerce, and resources from the Chamber were no longer available to deliver these.

2.2 A discussion on the gaps in existing provision and barriers to progress revealed views that:

- There are some good initiatives in GM but scale is missing
- Lack of funding for environment education projects was a barrier
- Linking up between projects and a sense of urgency were absent
- Establishing a link to Community wellbeing would be important
- Difficulty to quantify the demand for skills from businesses
- Barriers existed to taking theory into practise
- Engaging people and a strong call for action was needed
- A succession strategy in education, from schools to HEIs and into work was needed.

## **3.0 EXISTING GM SKILLS PROGRAMMES**

3.1 Gemma Marsh gave a presentation on the work for the GMCA Skills Team and existing skill provision in GM (see Annex 01).

3.2 It was noted that:

- Skills could be linked to a Good employment charter
- Apprenticeships could be utilised to meet the public sector target – how do you raise the quality?
- Can we use Social Value commitment of GMCA to raise awareness and action with business?

- The Low Carbon/Environment Sector was thought difficult to define due to its cross cutting nature.
- There was a need to develop 10 priorities for advice and guidance
- There was a need for clarity on the types and levels of jobs in the sector
- GM will see the adult education budget devolved in in 2019/20 (£18m) and was and opportunity
- The Careers and enterprise programme can be sector specific if we can get business mentors.
- Carbon literacy is cross cutting and is about employability
- Need to have Heads and School Governors on board in schools.
- Could be a cross cutting theme on the Skills Summit Network.
- The FE loan facility may provide funding for HEIs
- Need to improve the image of environment skills with students.

#### **4.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SKILLS:**

- 4.1 Krista Patrick presented a paper on proposals for a Green Skills Programme, why they are needed and how they could be delivered including examples of existing programmes and funding opportunities.
- 4.2 Two of the most significant issues faced by the UK today are persistently high unemployment – particularly amongst the young – and the decline of our natural environment – particularly the loss of wildlife and natural habitats. High unemployment removes people from the productive economy and additionally costs the nation in increased benefit payments, increased healthcare and anti-social behaviour costs. When people are unemployed, it can have significant long term impacts on their self-esteem, as well as their attitude to work and to society, and it can significantly harm their mental and physical health and wellbeing. A declining natural environment reduces the ability of the natural world to provide people with a wide range of benefits that underpin our wealth and wellbeing – from the provision of healthy food and clean drinking water; through the regulation of flood and drought and the provision of places to exercise and relax; to the creation of vibrant community spirit around shared local natural places.
- 4.3 The Climate Change Low Emission Strategy Implementation Plan includes Action E18: Identify funding to support Natural Deal skills development. The Natural Capital Group, Skills and Employment Partnership are identified as lead organisations. In 2014 a proposal for a work and skills programme with key environmental outcomes funded through the EU Programme and Big Lottery was developed by Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Groundwork for the Natural Capital Group but the ESF 2014 – 2020 programme did not fit with what was proposed without significant restructuring and the need for multiple funding bids for specific elements of the proposal. However the proposal is still valid today and the group and key partners are still keen to progress a similar type proposal.
- 4.4 The ‘Green Skills Programme’ would provide a suite of employment, skills development and volunteering projects that move workless and unemployed

population towards the labour market by utilising the development, enhancement and management of Greater Manchester's Green Infrastructure assets.

- 4.5 This Programme could provide enhanced Green Infrastructure management capacity in support of the Greater Manchester Climate Change Action Plan – enhancing ecosystem service capacity - at a time of great uncertainty and change with regards public sector services. These projects will focus on addressing priorities within our Green Infrastructure eg nature reserves, SSSIs, river valleys, canals, housing environments, street greening, school grounds, allotment creation, gardens, and business premises/parks.
- 4.6 Examples of relevant funded green skills programmes in Greater Manchester and Lancashire were also presented, together with funding opportunities. Individual projects could be developed to reflect local needs of specific audiences / populations but are likely to consist of a mix of formal and informal volunteering, training, skills development and employment opportunities. It was proposed that each partner with experience on a particular project would help develop this activity further, and ensure that partners work together to identify opportunities and gaps in delivery. A key outcome would be an effective co-ordination of activity on Natural Capital and Green Skills that could become integrated into regional strategies for Greater Manchester. It was suggested that this proposal was presented to the next Natural Capital Group meeting.

## **5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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