

## **GM GREEN CITY REGION PARTNERSHIP**

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2020

**Subject:** CHALLENGE GROUP UPDATES

**Report of:** Mark Atherton on behalf of Challenge Group Chairs

---

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to outline the progress made by the 5 Year Environment Plan (5YEP) Challenge Groups in developing their key priorities through Task and Finish Action groups.

The accompanying presentation provides an updated overview of the Challenge Group priorities and how these are being delivered through Task and Finish Groups.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Partnership is asked to:

- Note the progress in developing the Mission Based Approach and the associated Challenge Groups and Task and Finish Groups activity.

### **CONTACT OFFICERS:**

Mark Atherton: [mark.atherton@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:mark.atherton@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The 5YEP Challenge Groups have now all met at least five times and have established key priority areas to be addressed by the Task and Finish Groups. Their progress is being supported and monitored under the Mission Based Approach, as set out in the Five Year Environment Plan and Local Industrial Strategy.

## 2.0 COMMUNICATIONS AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

- **Key Messages T&F** has discussed how partners in the Green City Region can “speak with one voice” when communicating action which supports the Five Year Plan. The symbol of the Green Bee was agreed as the most appealing symbol of the Green City Region to businesses and individual carbon generators and we now have permission to use the symbol from Manchester City Council. The group is working with the GMCA Comms team to create a joined up narrative which gives sensitive consideration to the environment post-Covid messaging.
- **Case Studies T&F** group will ensure we have powerful stories which appeal to our target audiences. Challenge group members have started to feed in case studies and a framework is being agreed for recording and collation. Partner case studies will be featured on the new Green City Region website (due for launch September 2020) and represent the broad range of environmental work carried out across the region making an impact on the Five Year Environment Plan.
- **Talent and Ambassadors T&F** led by the BBC and GMCA has identified influential spokespeople who will speak on behalf of and be supportive of GM Green City work. Care is being taken to ensure that spokespeople reflect the diversity of the region and feature people who have an appeal across all audiences and sectors.
- **Behaviour Change T&F** led by the Carbon Literacy Project, has looked at best examples of behavior change in GM, identified key gaps and looked at target groups. Carbon Literacy training, focused around communicating the climate emergency, is pending for all Communications Challenge Group members.
- **Covid-19 key messages** sub group has been set up to discuss some of the urgent messaging regarding Covid-19 recovery and how the messaging will be executed.
- **Green Summit** sub group to be established to review the 2020 summit and start preparation for the next green summit in 2021.

### 3.0 ENERGY INNOVATION

- **Energy Innovation Agency (EIA) T&F**, led by SSE Enterprise and the three universities was launched at the Green Summit. When complete, the EIA concept will provide the governance framework and act as the gate keeper at the center of a Smart Energy Transition Region.
- **Heat Pump Accelerator T&F** has now met, developed and provided via Evergreen Energy and Clean Air Solutions an Assignment of Rights proposal, while also feeding into the wider skills action plan.
- **Decarbonised Heat assessment** phase 1 has now been completed. This was led by Aecom and funded by BEIS and has identified 37 heat related schemes which each need to be deployed to meet our ambition of carbon neutrality by 2038. Phase 2 of the project is expected to commence Mid October and operate through to April 21, with an aim of delivering outline business cases for several of these schemes identified in phase 1.
- **Solar PV** activity across the region. Currently we are aware of 7+MW of planned solar PV installs through the Energy Systems Catapult ERDF funded project Unlocking Clean Energy in Greater Manchester. The GM Solar Together homeowner project is now completing the final installs, with cr1MW of generation and storage capacity installed. This generated over £1.1m of resident investment and benefit.

### 4.0 LOW CARBON BUILDINGS

- **Retrofit Accelerator (RFA) T&F** led by Salford University, has developed the concept outlined in the Retrofit Strategy. The discussion paper outlining the approach and required work packages has been presented internally within GMCA obtaining approval to commission a study into consumer insight focused on demographics, complimenting current stock condition modeling. The next phase of development and delivery has begun following the findings. The RFA proposal provides the umbrella for wider task and finish groups, bringing these together to form individual work packages with in the RFA.
- **Skills T&F** led by GMCA, supported by Growth Co and CITB completed a skills workshop with challenge Group members, providing a gap analysis and identifying areas of focus across retrofit. From this a skills action plan has been completed to support the regions wider aspirations and how this can support Covid-19 recovery plans.
- **Public Buildings T&F** led by GMCA has completed a soft market test with 4 organisations to understand the differing approaches to large scale public retrofit across the public estate including all 10 districts, GM Fire and GMP. Please note that TFGM have already completed a separate investment grade audit of number of the own buildings. Discussions are now being had with the districts on how these recommendations will be taken forward.

## 5.0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- **GM Tree & Woodland Strategy (All our Trees) T&F** led by City of Trees - The Trees for Climate initiative is a five year programme and City of Trees is awaiting a decision from the Government on their application for funding to support the delivery of 1,000 ha of new woodland. City of Trees has engaged with its partners to develop a programme of 140 ha of new woodland creation schemes for 2020/21. Partners have been urged to come forward with new planting sites for years 2 to 5. City of Trees is in the process of implementing policies and procedures to resume volunteer activity in line with Government CV guidance. Based on the Citizen Forester model a strategic approach is being developed for the long term management of trees and woodland planted as part of the Trees for Climate initiative.
- **DEFRA GM Peatland Restoration Pilot T&F** led by Natural England and GMCA – final report on the GM Peat Pilot Report redrafted following feedback, and to incorporate NE and MMU State of the Bog modelling of upland peat condition. Final report now approved by Defra and will feed into the forthcoming England Peat Strategy. LinkedIn communications campaign, around tone of peatland restoration messaging, with Creative Concern to be delivered autumn 2020.
- **Natural Course T&F** EA and GMCA have undertaken an evaluation survey to understand the take up of natural capital tools, developed through Natural Course & Urban Pioneer, including accounts and ecosystem services opportunity mapping. To date, 23 online respondents have completed the survey with 8 detailed follow up interviews. Results are being used to inform future support and use of the tools. City of Trees have completed work at Dales Brow, Swinton, to create a SuDS scheme that provides water quality and flood risk mitigation benefits. Groundwork has received final plans for removal of the weir at the Meeting of the Waters site on the River Tonge in the Croal catchment. Consultants are working on the development of a project portfolio for improvement projects along the River Irk.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain T&F**, led by Natural England has finalized production of the BNG Action Plan which has been shared with Local Planning Authorities and key priorities identified. GMEU have been consulted on 35 applications that are delivering Biodiversity Net Gain in that past 18 months including more than 150 ha of habitat creation and £300,000 secured through off-site contributions. Evidence of Biodiversity Net Gain viability has been shared with officers and discussion ongoing to overcome challenges. The Green Summit included an update on Biodiversity Net Gain and the Draft Environment Bill. Training for members and officers is being organised via a virtual webinar.
- **Nature Recovery Network T&F** – In August this year Greater Manchester was announced as one of 5 areas across England to pilot the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies over the next 7 months in advance of these being rolled out across the Country as part of the Environment Bill. The Defra Environmental Land Management System Test initial work is work focussing on the production of Nature Recovery Network mapping by GMEU which will be used to inform discussions with farmer / land managers. A Natural

Solutions Advisor has been appointed to carry out these discussions and identify potential test sites.

- **GM Environment Fund T&F** - Update paper taken to the Combined Authority meeting on 25th September with all recommendations approved. Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Environmental Finance work programmes have been aligned and funding opportunities identified including Green Challenge Recovery Fund and a portfolio of shovel ready projects developed by environmental NGOs. Solicitors have been appointed to establish the GM Environment Fund as an independent charity and limited company.
- **IGNITION T&F** - Survey launched to understand post-COVID attitudes to parks and willingness to pay for improvements. On Funding Stream 1 (surface water banding charge drop), groundtruthing of financially feasible sites has continued with findings being analysed by Jacobs. Environmental Finance have been procured to advise on the investment strategy for the pipeline of sites. An Evidence Base of NBS benefits has been published, with a Local Authority-facing report in development. Comprehensive review of future funding streams took place in September, with an action planning session taking place in October. Finally, Phase 1 works (small-scale NBS) of the Living Lab commenced in September, with Phase 2 (large-scale NBS) due to start installation in October.
- **Environment Vision** – Natural Environment Toolkit Launched in the run up to the Green Summit with resources including the ‘showcase film’ and animations being used as part of social media. The Nature GM website has been updated to include the campaign including tips on how people and businesses can play their part. My Wild Garden campaign sign ups for 2020 have been just over 1000 and unlikely to hit target of 5000 in 2020. Uncertain why there is a reduced uptake from public but suspect the need to enter email / postcode is a barrier.
- **Social prescribing T&F** - carried out two workshops to develop a bid for funding from additional sources (DEFRA/NHSE and the Dream Fund). Initial explorations with sustainability leads are also being undertaken around further inclusion of biodiversity in the GMHSCP Green Plan.

## 6.0 SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

- **Procurement policy drivers/interventions** is working to identify carbon hotspots, priority sectors and contracts to target. It will look at ‘redlines’ to include in contracts e.g. carbon neutral travel to work, local supply chain and good employment charter. The last meeting of the SCP challenge group focused on embedding circular economy and climate change ambitions within procurement.
- **Public Sector Plastic Pact** will develop a common approach for targeting single use plastic consumables and plastic packaging across GM public sector and hence, remove inconsistency, and inform the development of authority led plastics strategies across GM.

- **Food** - work to look at supply chains is about to commence with STaR and AGMA Procurement to explore procurement avenues within catering and schools and work has resumed to create a Greater Manchester Food Strategy.
- **Circular Economy resource flow mapping** has commenced with University of Manchester to capture material flows within the City Region.

#### **7.0 5 YEAR ENVIRONMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION FORUM**

- **Covid 19 Recovery Plan (Environment Theme)** – reviewed and commented upon the draft Action Plan. Questioned how/whether the other themes of the wider GM Recovery Plan were being assessed for their environmental impact.
- **Review of Challenge Group Activity** – received presentations and provided feedback on:
  - Energy Innovation Agency
  - GM Environment Fund
- **Green Summit** – provided feedback on progress made in Green Summit Planning including content, structure and format.