



## Greater Manchester Green City Region Partnership

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Subject: **WORK PROGRAMME 2021 & CHALLENGE GROUP UPDATES**

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

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### PURPOSE OF THE 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 (located in the presentation pack) provides an updated overview of the Challenge Group priorities and how these are being delivered through Task and Finish Groups.

At their last meeting, many of the Challenge Groups reflected on the work of the previous twelve months and began to develop thinking about priorities for 2021/22. An updated work programme for the Challenge Groups will therefore be presented at the July Partnership meeting.

### 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.
- Note that updated work programmes will be presented to the July Partnership meeting.

### CONTACT OFFICERS:

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The 5YEP Challenge Groups have all met in the last quarter and have established key priority areas to be addressed by the Task and Finish Groups this year. 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** group 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.
- **Talent and Ambassadors** 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** led by the Carbon Literacy Project, has looked at best examples of behaviour 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. A bespoke piece of work, with key stakeholders has commenced on citizen engagement and sustainable lifestyles to develop a work programme for the next year.
- **Green Summit and COP26 activity**, led by GMCA will be supported by the Communications Challenge Group to ensure the event reflects the Green City Region and successfully reaches residents and businesses across GM.

## 3.0 ENERGY INNOVATION

- **Energy Innovation Agency**, a partnership between the three universities, SSE and Bruntwood has formed a steering group which, having agreed a governance structure, is developing suitable Terms of Reference and a Collaboration Agreement acceptable to all parties. Role profiles for the two senior posts have been agreed and recruitment has commenced. In addition, work has started on the messaging, USP development and value propositions to support the Business Development Lead once recruited.
- **Solar PV activity across the region**. As previously reported, we are aware of 7+MW of planned solar PV installs through the Energy Systems Catapult ERDF funded project. The GM Solar Together homeowner project has now completing the final installs, with cr1MW of generation and storage capacity installed leveraging

circa £1.1m. A further 8.2MW of solar PV is proposed under the GMCA-led Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme project (see 4.0 for further details). It is also understood that two GM schemes have applied for Rural Community Energy Funding to install circa 6MW of Solar in the city region. A paper has been prepared outlining the proposed approach to the development and delivery of GM-wide low carbon energy generation pipeline and route to market. This has been presented at the Decarbonising of Public Estate and the Programme Delivery Executive meetings and the approach was agreed by both groups

## 4.0 LOW CARBON BUILDINGS

- **Retrofit Taskforce** is chaired by the Mayor of GM and brings together relevant organisations to work on developing a detailed action plan to deliver home and building retrofit at scale. The group has held two meetings and has focused on skills, finance and accelerating delivery. There is crossover with some of the members of the Low Carbon Buildings Challenge to ensure that the work of the challenge group supports that of the taskforce.
- **Retrofit Accelerator (RFA)** - a 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 modelling. This work has identified 3 market segments, who together represent 31% of GM homeowners, who would be open to messaging and taking action on retrofit. It also gives insights into which messaging will have most impact in which groups. A discussion paper has been taken to the Programme Delivery Executive meeting and agreed on by the group. This will now form part of the work programme of the Retrofit Taskforce
- **Skills Group** led by GMCA and supported by a number of partners has developed a GM Retrofit Skills Action Plan. The plan sets out an informed short, medium, and long terms skills plan, matching skills support with employment demand, which supports the development of retrofit skills at the correct scale to ensure employment opportunities are achieved. Using ESF Skills for Growth the GMCA Work and Skills Team have started to implement Short Term Skills Action Plan, which is key to developing high quality retrofit skills, with progress taking place in the following areas:
  - A programme of Retrofit training worth approximately £1.5 million, funded through ESF Skills for Growth will be commissioned imminently. This package will offer a variety of training focused on upskilling existing trades and professionals within employers and has been developed to respond to the current scale of skills need regionally.
  - This commission will also pilot CPD for skills providers who lead construction provision within their institutions. This CPD will focus on upskilling these skills providers in retrofit but also to carry out pilot projects to embed retrofit skills delivery within curriculums and carry out a feasibility study for their organisation to understand the capital resource they would need to deliver new content and training for retrofit skills at scale.

- **Public Buildings** led by GMCA a consortium of 15 partners (10 Districts, GMP, GMFRS, TFGM, MFT and RNCM) submitted a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme for £80.7m grant funding of public sector building energy retrofit measures (energy efficiency and generation). A formal Section 31 grant offer from BEIS for very close to the full allocation was received at the end of February. Procurement activity is now being mobilized with a view to all schemes being delivered by end of Sept 2021. This was the largest bid into the fund and its success demonstrates the strength in GM collaboration. In parallel to this, £450k of grant funding from the Low Carbon Skills Fund has also been secured to support delivery of the PSDS projects and the production of Building Energy Decarbonisation Plans, which will be used to map a pathway to expedite decarbonization of the wider public sector estate.
- **Heat Pump Accelerator** led by Southways Housing is a new task and finish group that has been set up to look at accelerating the installation of heat pumps in GM. The group is being has agreed three key issues to focus on, affordability, noise and network connectivity. Two meetings of the group have taken place.

## 5.0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- **Implementation of the GM Tree & Woodland Strategy (All our Trees)** led by City of Trees - The Trees for Climate initiative is a 5-year government funded programme of tree planting. City of Trees co-ordinated the planting of 133,385 trees in the 20/21 planting season and is now developing Yr 2 of the planting programme. In May the Framers Resilience Fund was launched to incentivise more farmers to come forward with sites for planting. CoT has worked with the GM Forests Partnership to pen a letter to the Environment Secretary requesting support for the development of a GM Ash Die Back Action plan. This has been signed by the GM Environment portfolio holder.
- **Natural Course** – work is underway on planning Phase 4 of the project, which begins in the autumn. A request for an amendment was submitted to the EU at end of June 2021, this includes projects to address invasive non-native species, especially Giant Hogweed, in the River Irwell catchment. The first meeting of the GM Water Forum was held on 18th June 2021 as part of the GM Natural Capital Group annual conference. Consultants completed detailed river habitat survey of the Whittle Brook waterbody within the Northern Gateway strategic allocation site (Bury & Rochdale districts). GMCA, Environment Agency & United Utilities re-issued request for quotation for consultants to study micro plastic contamination of rivers in GM
- **Support local authorities in implementing Biodiversity Net Gain** – A webinar was held in February focused on BNG in Greater Manchester and had over 250+ attendees from local authorities, developers and other interested stakeholders. To follow that up, bespoke CIEEM accredited training is being delivered for local authority planners, concluding in March, to raise awareness and knowledge of BNG and its implications for Greater Manchester. GM BNG Guidance has also been updated and issued. The GMCA is also seeking to commission work to understand

how it can support local authorities and partners to bring forward proposals to deliver off-site BNG.

- **Nature Recovery Network** – the pilot was concluded at the end of May and maps existing habitat and species distributions and highlights the key priorities for nature’s recovery. The draft document will be published alongside the national strategy.
- **GM Environment Fund** – partners across GM, working through the umbrella of the GMEF, were successful in securing £1.8m of funding from the first round of Defra’s Green Recovery Challenge Fund in December. In addition, Suez is putting its £200,000/year social value contributions through the GMEF. Both of these, though in particular the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, will provide for resource to develop the GMEF further and attract further funding. Projects being delivered under the Green Recovery Challenge Fund are now underway and the call for projects under the SUEZ Community Fund recently closed. The GMEF is still awaiting the decision on the application to Investment Readiness Fund to take forward BNG and carbon offsetting investment models still waiting for decision
- **IGNITION** – a planning support tool to identify priority areas for green infrastructure implementation is in development. An international review has been conducted of green infrastructure targets, with the implications of each approach to be presented to a forthcoming NCG meeting to inform GM’s GI target setting process. An external-facing ‘interim report’ to be launched to share key successes, learnings, challenges, and outputs to date. Funding Stream 1: Feasibility study of sites within UU’s priority areas is ongoing, with specific technical and financial benefits to UU being modelled to inform the business case for investment. Future Funding Streams: Planning underway for a contactless donations trial in local parks. Network modelling of a neighbourhood SuDS programme in Walkden is ongoing. User testing of a green roofs cost-benefit calculator is underway, and a consultant has been appointed to map potential green roof retrofit locations in Manchester and Salford. NBS Living Lab: A successful launch of the Living Lab at the University of Salford took place in mid June as part of the NCG conference.
- **Social prescribing** – following a successful bid led by the GM Health and Social Care Partnership, GM was selected as one of 7 national pilots to trial the delivery of green social prescribing over the next two years. £500,000 of new funding was secured and will include delivery of 3-5 locality trials together with an overarching programme of support to scale up and share the learning. A call for submission of projects to deliver on this closed in February and proposals have been analysed.
- **NCG indicators** – work is ongoing to collate a comprehensive set of indicators for the natural environment that will help the group measure its progress against the 5YEP.

## 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. A study has commenced on how local levers can be used to encourage people and businesses to take more environmentally sustainable actions in Greater Manchester. This includes all local levers including legal, regulatory and policy control and could include procurement protocols, local authority taxes and levies and the use of 'soft power'.

- **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. A draft report with recommendations has been produced and will be considered at a Heads of Procurement meeting in the near future.
- **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.

The **SCP Plan** has recently been taken to the SCP Challenge Group and the priority actions were agreed by the group. The next step is to look at where the group can support and what new members need to be invited to support delivery.

## 7.0 5YEP IMPLEMENTATION FORUM

- **Review of Green City Region activity** – received presentations and provided feedback on:
  - Role of business in delivering the 5YEP
  - LA UK100 framework
- **Green Summit and COP26** – provided feedback on the Green Summit/COP26 including content, structure and format.

The group has also reflected on its role in supporting delivery of the 5YEP and these changes have been reflected in the Terms of Reference.