

GREATER MANCHESTER GREEN CITY REGION PARTNERSHIP

Date: **24 July 2020**

Subject: **CHALLENGE GROUP PROGRESS UPDATE**

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.

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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** 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** 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** 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 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.

3.0 ENERGY INNOVATION

- **Energy Transition Region (ETR) and Energy Innovation Agency (EIA)**, led by SSE Enterprise has presented to the Strategic Innovation Board, 5yr Environment Forum amongst others. The Energy Innovation Agency concept outline business case is progressing and on track for September. When complete, the EIA concept will provide the governance framework and act as the gate keeper at the center of an Energy Transition Region.

- **Heat Pump Accelerator** 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** led by Aecom and funded by BEIS has identified 37 heat related schemes which each need to be deployed to meet our ambition of carbon neutrality by 2038. The report is currently with BEIS for formal sign off, but we are hopeful this will lead to a phase 2 project to create outline business cases for several of these schemes.
- **Solar PV** activity led by Northwest Energy Hub and GMCA. Currently we have 21.4 MW of solar PV at either feasibility or outline business case which has led to a recently completed a solar PV soft market test to understand the markets view of building and car park (solar car ports) from a capex, partner and PPA lease approach. Over 20 organisations ranging from SME's to larger corporate developers have responded, covering all of the identified buildings and carparks. This is currently being reviewed and an anonymised summary will be shared at the forthcoming challenge group, with a more detailed site by site approach being provided to all of the asset owners involved.

4.0 LOW CARBON BUILDINGS

- **Retrofit Accelerator (RFA)** 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. Subject to the combined findings, due in October, a further phase of development and delivery will be considered. 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** 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. A skills action plan is now being drafted to support the regions wider aspirations,
- **Public Buildings** led by GMCA has commenced 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.

5.0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- **GM Tree & Woodland Strategy (All our Trees)** led by City of Trees officially launched on May 12th. City of Trees, along with other Community Forests, has submitted a bid to DEFRA for funding from the Nature for Climate Fund. If successful this will support up to 1000 hectares of new tree planting in GM. City of Trees continue to deliver tree planting

across GM as part of the Urban Tree Challenge. The programme was halted owing to the Covid-19 lockdown. The majority of the planting will be completed in July.

- **DEFRA GM Peatland Restoration Pilot** led by Natural England and GMCA has submitted a draft final report to DEFRA and is awaiting feedback. Headline messages are poor management of peat and unsuitable land uses causing emissions of well over 200,000 t CO₂-e yr⁻¹. Wildfires are addressed in the report through a Winter Hill case study. Following feedback from DEFRA, a series of update discussions with partners and stakeholders will run during July.
- **Natural Course** led by EA/GMCA is developing an evaluation survey to understand the take up of natural capital tools including accounts and ecosystem services opportunity mapping. Contract to research micro plastic contamination of rivers in GM will be finalized in July 2020. Provision of ecological and Water Framework Directive advice to waterside developments continues through River Ecology Project.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain**, led by Natural England, has set up a revised governance structure to embed the group within GMCA planning governance. A revised action plan for delivery, work-strand prioritization, a flow chart for BNG process and case studies have been developed. GMEU is now requiring BNG as part of development applications with positive feedback. Decision taken to aim for 10% BNG in-line with draft Environment Bill.
- **Nature Recovery Network** Task and Finish Group has been set up to support delivery. Lancashire Wildlife Trust was successful in securing Defra funding for developing an NRN as part of a test for the Environmental Land Management System. Partners (LWT, GMCA, GMEU, NE) are working to scope the work required to deliver an NRN and how this fits with provisions in the government's Environment Bill.
- **GM Environment Fund** – following a procurement exercise in the spring, GMCA is working with Lancashire Wildlife Trust to enter into a partnership to deliver the Environment Fund. Work by Environmental Finance on developing models for habitat banking and carbon trading continues including stakeholder engagement and development of an investment strategy.
- **IGNITION** work packages are progressing but have been impacted by COVID-19 lockdown: a GI baseline has been produced and an evidence base of NBS benefits, ground-truthing of Funding Stream 1 sites was delayed by restrictions and will now progress virtually with support by the technical consultant, procurement is live for a financial consultant, and construction is due to start on the first phase of the Living Lab at the University of Salford.
- **Environment Vision** – the launch of the Natural Environment Toolkit in March was delayed due to COVID-19. The film will now be launched at Green Summit in September, with a social media campaign in the lead up including release of a series of animations and stills. Work is ongoing to support dissemination of the joint GMCA/LWT My Wild Garden campaign, encouraging new sign ups in addition to the 797 sign ups, by 15th June. Overall target of 5000. Virtual Manchester Festival of Nature held 28th June.

- **Urban Pioneer** led by EA has produced the final output of the impact analysis work and lessons learned. These outputs conclude the Urban Pioneer Programme which officially ended on March 31st 2020. The local EA team are also now reviewing the lessons learned to understand how they can evolve to adopt these lessons. This group will now be closed.
- **Social prescribing** Task and Finish group has been established to bring together partners with an interest in developing GM's natural environment social prescribing model. Scope of the group was signed off at the NCG at its last meeting.

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.
- **Circular Economy resource flow mapping** has commenced with University of Manchester to capture material flows within the City Region.

7.0 SYEP 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 initial views on the structure and format of the proposed Green Summit for September 2020