



Shared Intelligence



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# Road to zero carbon: council action on green jobs and skills

A report by Shared Intelligence  
For Friends of the Earth and Ashden



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# Introduction

**This report has been produced at a pivotal point in time. Impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt by communities and businesses, the economy is yet to rebound, and government policy around the levelling up agenda is imminent. What has emerged more strongly than before, is the need to grow back in a way that addresses the more impending challenge of the climate emergency – through the growth of green jobs and skills.**

The research into this work has been delivered in conjunction with the local government sector, with contributions from industry, education, communities and a reference group, specifically convened to support the research.<sup>1</sup> It builds on a body of evidence which is referenced throughout this report, and which seeks to define more action that can be taken to stimulate green jobs. It also builds on the work of Friends of the Earth – working through the Blueprint Coalition, formed of local government organisations, environmental NGOs, and academics and backed by around 100 councils – to identify ways to raise green jobs and skills up the agenda of local government. This report adds to that body of evidence, setting out the role of local government and its partners and identifying the action that should be taken now.

The role of local government is complex. Different types of councils have different levels of statutory and non-statutory obligations ranging from delivery of retrofit to transport, nature preservation to housing and conservation programmes.

But all have a leadership and convening role. In this research, we explore the action required by local government and its partners to deliver change. It draws on best practice already within the sector and sets out where greater progress can be made. It also considers the needs of local communities – particularly disadvantaged communities who may not naturally consider opportunities within the green jobs market or might be left behind without explicit consideration in developing green jobs and skills strategies.

During the research, it has become apparent that there are pockets of good or live practice but many of the ideas or ambitions have yet to be fully embedded. In some parts of the country, there is a clear strategy backed with political ambition, funding and programmes at a grass roots level. In others, there is limited ambition and action. In most cases however, attention is paid to addressing statutory targets which does not include stimulating the jobs market and addressing skills supply and demand.

Councils aren't in this alone. Business, education, other parts of the public sector and most importantly the local community all have a part to play. Action must be taken with and by other parts of the system, ensuring clarity over roles and responsibilities – to grow the level of interest and deliver practical action required to make greater progress. This report seeks to identify those actions and encourage councils to consider their implementation.

<sup>1</sup> The reference group comprised of: Friends of the Earth, Ashden, Association of Directors of Environment, Planning and Transport, Local Government Association, London Councils, SOS-UK, Teach the Future and Shared Intelligence.

# Introduction

The rest of this report includes:

- The context around which this research has been conducted.
- Definitions of green jobs and skills and why they are considered important to place-shaping.
- A summary of the role of local government in driving green jobs and skills
- A series of case studies identifying best practice and illustrating action and approaches taken by councils and their partners to advance green jobs and skills.
- A set of recommendations and practical actions that councils and their partners can take forward.

**The Blueprint Coalition has developed five priorities for action to support the achievement of net zero climate emissions.**

## The coalition's five priorities for action:

- 1** Invest more in low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure including public transport networks and renewable energy.
- 2** Prioritise and focus support for reskilling and retraining for green jobs so that local authorities can target training where it is needed most.
- 3** Ensure that our homes are fit for the future, by investing more in retrofitting to high energy efficiency standards, with social housing a priority, and ensure that councils are able to require zero carbon housing in all new development.
- 4** Make it easy for people to walk, cycle and work remotely by extending funds for active travel and enabling local authorities to permanently allocate dedicated space to walking and cycling.
- 5** Accelerate tree planting, peatland restoration, green spaces and other green infrastructure. This must include resourcing for local authorities to maintain existing parks, plant trees and address gaps in access to green spaces in their areas.

# Context – Why now?

It has been over two years since Net Zero became law, requiring the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the Government has unveiled its [Ten Point Plan](#) to build a greener economy, with a pledge to create 250,000 new green jobs by 2030 as well as its [Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener](#) (2021).<sup>3</sup> These ambitions signal a promising solution to the dual crises of skills shortages and climate change, and an opportunity to provide a more level playing field for all communities and places as we emerge from the pandemic.

**"Through the grow back from Covid, which has an absolute possibility to be green, I think councils see that as a route to greener local place"**

**London authority attendee at a research roundtable<sup>4</sup>**

Recent announcements about green job creation and stimulus packages from government have also encouraged some councils to consider what local green jobs and skills programmes are needed. Yet despite over 75 per cent of councils having declared climate emergencies, activity to generate green jobs and skills does not feature heavily through climate change statements and strategies. Across London for example, 22 councils have published climate action plans but only a handful have the inclusion of green jobs and skills as part of the focus.<sup>5</sup>

Focusing on green jobs and skills needs to go beyond setting the tone for what needs to be a more significant focus for our economy in the future. Translating this at an individual council level is a greater challenge but there are examples of good and live practice which can be replicated by councils in other parts of the country.

Much of the literature available on this topic does not directly address action that local government needs to take. In fact the work of the Green Jobs Taskforce which was charged with setting the direction for the job market as we "[transition to a high-skill, low carbon economy](#)" did not even include local government as a stakeholder. While action at a central government level broadly sets out the overall ambition, there is an assumption that local government has the capacity and capability to implement a localised approach. A lack of clarity and consistency across current policy does not fully enable this and as a result has an impact over advances in the green economy, jobs and skills.

2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-becomes-first-major-economy-to-pass-net-zero-emissions-law>

3 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/936567/10\\_POINT\\_PLAN\\_BOOKLET.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936567/10_POINT_PLAN_BOOKLET.pdf)

4 Several roundtables were facilitated in the research phase to gather views and best practice from the sector, industry and the community

5 London Councils research across London Boroughs

# Context – Why now?

The key role local government will play in this agenda as identified by the Local Government Association (LGA) as “facilitating technology transitions in homes and businesses, informing constituents, supporting local businesses and the upskilling of the local workforce”.<sup>6</sup> Yet [recent analysis](#) from the Association of Directors of Environment, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) has identified that recruitment and retention challenges are faced by councils in relation to the skills and capacity needed by local government to support net zero targets by 2050.

There is also an opportunity at this time to focus resources on creating pathways into green jobs and supporting those furthest from the job market. Young people as well as those from disadvantaged communities need to be supported to develop skills in high quality green jobs to level up the economy.

Through this research, we have identified potential action that local government can take at different levels. As the country recovers from the pandemic, a focus on green skills will accelerate local climate action and lead to better jobs.

## Policy and tools in support of furthering green jobs and skills

The Government’s recently published [Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener](#) (2021) includes a section on ‘local climate action’ which reiterates the ‘essential role’ of local government in meeting national net zero ambitions.<sup>7</sup> The strategy recognises that there are currently no net zero statutory responsibilities for local authorities and does not believe they should be created. It argues that: “this is because of the existing level of local commitment with the sector, and because it is difficult to create a uniform requirement that reflects the diversity of barriers and opportunities local places experience”.<sup>8</sup>

However, the report does identify three key areas for supporting local action on net zero:

- Setting clearer expectations for local places;
- Providing resources for local places; and
- Building capacity and capability at the local level.

Indeed, the strategy recognises the unique ability of local government to work at a grassroots level. It also acknowledges that councils are currently facing significant barriers to delivering place-based approaches to net zero.<sup>9</sup> The strategy recognises that local and central government need to work together and seeks to set clearer expectations to councils about their role, provide them with appropriate resources and build capacity for local action.

<sup>6</sup> [Local green jobs - accelerating a sustainable economic recovery | Local Government Association](#)

<sup>7</sup> [net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [\\*net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> [What does the UK's Net Zero strategy mean for cities and regions? | The Carbon Trust](#)

# Context – Why now?

Further to policy directed at climate change, there is a growing set of policies which are beginning to integrate what is needed to deliver green jobs and skills. The white paper: [Skills for Jobs](#) whilst not expressly setting out to address the current and future needs of the green economy, emphasises the need to understand local skills needs and investing in local priorities. It focuses on the relationship between skills and business and in the parts of the system best placed to deliver this agenda. However, the [amendment](#) made in the Skills Bill now seeks to ensure that jobs relating to climate change and other environmental goals are prominent in the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). LSIPs now have the potential to deliver against the green jobs and skills agenda and the role of local government in delivering this must be considered central.

In summary, there is an emerging dialogue around the role of local government in taking action to stimulate green jobs and skills, though this is not yet fully integrated into the different strands of government policy.



# What is a "green" job?

Through this research, we have identified a high level of ambiguity as to what a “green” job really entails. There is currently no single or universal definition of a green job, nor a way to measure progress toward Government’s targets and ambitions. In the most basic terms, a green job is one which has a positive environmental impact on the planet – either through direct or indirect means. As a result, most occupations ranging from managers to teachers to engineers can at some point have a green element to them.<sup>10</sup>

**"It's fair to say that boroughs are getting started on green skills, but many are unclear about what green skills are. There are significant skills capacity but not enough understanding of green skills"**

**London Borough Council representative**

**"The more you dive into the definition of green jobs and skills the fuzzier it gets"**

**Senior Energy Projects Officer**

**"There is no agreed definition, and the definition tends to fluctuate depending on who the conversation is with"**

**LEP representative**

Other definitions suggest that whilst green jobs should undeniably result in positive environmental outcomes, they should also be “decent”<sup>11</sup> and have “purpose”.<sup>12</sup> For instance, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) uses the following definition: “Green jobs are decent jobs that contribute to preserve or restore the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency”.<sup>13</sup> The added quality dimension implies that green jobs should provide appropriate career pathways for individuals and support professional goals and ambitions.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/44683169.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> [The challenges of defining a “green job” - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

<sup>12</sup> [‘People want a job with purpose’: why businesses are becoming more sustainable | Guardian green jobs | The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com)

<sup>13</sup> [What is a green job? \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org)

# What is a "green" job?

Similarly, the language we use to describe "green" jobs matters. Our research suggests that public understanding of the green economy is still relatively low, and green jobs are not always seen as an attractive or viable option, particularly by older workers who are nervous about transitioning into new sectors in fear of losing security. These findings are echoed in other studies. The Fabian Society (2021) has recently conducted a survey with 5,005 people across Great Britain to assess public perceptions of phrases commonly associated with the climate agenda, such as 'green jobs', 'net zero' and 'the green industrial revolution'. The results were published in *Talking Green: Public reactions to key climate change terms*.<sup>14</sup> They reveal that whilst 'green jobs' were received well by some groups, there was still significant confusion and scepticism around the term. This suggests that commonly used terms, especially those used by politicians and the media, do not connect with the public in the way they are intended to. Instead, they may provoke negative reactions, confusion and uncertainty. Changing the language and encouraging a greater understanding of the potential of jobs to deliver sustainable change is considered more compelling narrative to encourage people into new pathways.

**"Green jobs should not be treated separately from generic jobs, all jobs in the future will need to have a green element"**

**Mayoral Combined Authority representative**



<sup>14</sup> VI.3\_Talking-Green-briefing-1.pdf (fabians.org.uk)

# What is a "green" job?

## Work to develop local government definitions

This year there have been several major pieces of research to develop a definition to support councils in England understand what green jobs mean to their locality. The Local Government Association's report - [Local Green Jobs - accelerating a sustainable economic recovery](#) - analysed the jobs required in the future for a net zero economy. This breaks down the number of jobs required against a set of sectors across the low-carbon and renewable energy economy, considered to contribute most to net zero. Central London Forward, also produced a report this year - [Green Jobs and Skills in London: cross-London report](#) - highlighting the potential scale and nature of green jobs across London in the coming decade.<sup>15</sup> This work reviewed six potential definitions and adopted a missions-based approach to state that "green jobs are those jobs that facilitate meeting net zero and broader environmental goals".

While definitions will continue to be debated and developed with the inclusion and removal of sectors and sub-sectors, this should not be a distraction from local action. The fact remains that every sector needs to develop strong green credentials and in order to achieve this, skills development and training to enable the workforce to be part of their sector shift for a greener future will require focus. Our research recommends selecting and working with a definition that best suits each locality in the first instance and building on it with a body of evidence involving education and industry.

## Jobs and their contribution to zero carbon



<sup>15</sup> Central London Forward (CLF) is the strategic sub-regional partnership for Central London covering 12 local authorities.

# Diversity across green jobs

Some sectors which will play a key role in zero carbon, currently lack diversity. For example, the construction sector is heavily dominated by men and the pay gap is double on average for women in green jobs than women compared to highly polluting sectors.<sup>16</sup>

Research by Policy Exchange suggests that only 3.5% of those who work in the environment sector identify as from a minority background.<sup>17</sup> Research by the Greater London Authority suggests that people from underrepresented groups face significant barriers accessing green jobs in the infrastructure sector.<sup>18</sup> The research suggests that many organisations are not setting targets for diversity and inclusion, are not offering flexible working, and have non-diverse panels. These can pose barriers to equal access.

New initiatives such as ‘Race for Nature’s Recovery’, backed by leading environmental organisations (RSPB and The Climate Coalition) offer inspiration to build back better by boosting diversity.<sup>19</sup> The initiative is utilising the Government’s Kickstarter Scheme to support 118 young people from underrepresented demographics into their first job in the green sector.<sup>20</sup> The partnership intends that at least half of the placements will turn into full-time, permanent roles. As well as direct roles in conservation, placements will cover research, fundraising, marketing, social media management and administration.

Councils should work with disadvantaged communities to increase opportunities in the green sector, ensuring a common language and pathways to exploring skills requirements.

## London Borough of Barnet: supporting careers to promote diversity in regeneration industry

- Barnet Council is supporting the Emerging Talent Programme help launch careers in housing, regeneration and development for those from an ethnic minority background.
- The programme takes place over 21 months from January 2022 to October 2023, through three paid placements in different employers. It is designed to support recruits starting their career but is also open to those looking to change their career direction.
- The programme aims to provide candidates with leadership skills, technical and professional experience and contacts from different organisations and sectors, as well as enabling exposure and access to an array of careers.

<sup>16</sup> [Reaching Net-zero: Green upskilling and the retrofit opportunity | Nesta](#)

<sup>17</sup> [‘Too white’ green sector launches work scheme to be more diverse | Environment | The Guardian](#)

<sup>18</sup> [infrastructure\\_di.pdf \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Environmental organisations launch employment scheme for UK’s BAME youth \(edie.net\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Kickstart Scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

# Diversity across green jobs

## Voyage Youth Case Study

Our roundtable discussion with a community-based youth organisation has revealed that in general, young people have a sufficient understanding of green jobs, but do not necessarily see it as an attractive career option in comparison to other sectors such as law or finance. Many young people associated green jobs with engineering and the environmental sciences and could not see how their current qualifications would make them a good fit for the green sector. An overwhelming majority of roundtable participants said they had no prior exposure to green jobs at their place of study or through the school curriculum.

Voyage (Voice of Youth and Genuine Empowerment) Youth is a social justice charity that works with socially disadvantaged and excluded youth and aims to combat social exclusion and low educational achievement and to develop resilience.

As part of this project, Voyage Youth hosted a roundtable with members of their Youth Investigator Network to identify the opportunities and barriers that young people face in regard to pursuing green skills and green jobs.<sup>21,22</sup> The roundtable session explored the views of twelve black young people aged 16-to-18-years-old, principally from London Boroughs of Hackney and Haringey.



In the lead up to the roundtable, Voyage Youth worked with a group of young people to introduce the research and to stimulate discussion to understand the young person's perspective. After a series of conversations, a roundtable was convened to share views.

Participants described green jobs as a means of employment that improve or aim to improve the environment, and green skills as the capabilities and knowledge to fulfil these tasks in preserving and sustaining the environment. They further emphasised that every job is or can be a green job and should be treated as such, and that in the future every job will have to have a green element to it.

21 The Youth Investigator Network is Voyage's youth-led think-tank and consultancy.

22 Held in conjunction with Friends of the Earth, Ashden and Shared Intelligence.

# Diversity across green jobs

On the opportunities available for young people to attain green skills and pursue green jobs, roundtable attendees expressed that although opportunities are increasing, it is still not enough. Colleges and sixth forms don't bring enough awareness of green career opportunities, and don't offer enough support or guidance on how to look and apply for green jobs. They also felt there was not much exposure of the pathways to learn green skills for young people. The opportunities that are available were described as difficult to access as they were not engaging or interactive enough or were not recompensed. In order for green jobs and skills to become more attractive to young people, respondents suggested the media must make greater effort to portray such jobs as appealing, interesting, and accessible for young people. Participants suggested that green jobs could be promoted more on job websites such as LinkedIn.

Concern about the perceived barriers into green jobs and green skills were voiced, for example, that the type of person who works in the green sector must have studied sciences or have come from a high-earning family. Attendees also highlighted the need for greater class and racial representation; letting young people know that those who look like them are in green jobs so such jobs can be realistically attainable. For example, bringing a group of diverse people who are in green jobs to come into schools. 'If the green industry wants to make themselves appealing, they should also focus on diversity and forefront our thoughts and opinions'.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, young people highlighted social mobility and the opportunity to earn higher salaries in the future as being an important factor in pursuing potential green career paths. They did not, however perceive those green jobs commanded as high a salary as other jobs, despite the evidence suggesting the contrary.

On how green jobs can be promoted better to young people, attendees underlined the use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram, by local government, employers, and careers services, to extend their reach to young people on green jobs and opportunities. Using celebrity figures and 'influencers' on these social media platforms, who are popular with young people to promote green skills and green jobs was described as an effective potential method of developing an attractive narrative around green career opportunities among young people. More broadly, TV advertisements, billboards and posters in local areas, and workshops and work experiences offered to young people, were also mentioned as effective ways of promoting green jobs and skills.

The tools described as most helpful for making progress around the green agenda with young people were those that brought issues and topics to them, rather than them actively seeking opportunities where there were no obvious networks. This also extended to having lessons dedicated within the curriculum at schools and colleges across subject areas on the green agenda as well as the promotion of environmental documentaries on online streaming platforms. Examples of Netflix, Amazon Prime, and social media platforms like TikTok were highlighted as relevant channels to make green issues and skills fun and cool for young people. A further consideration was having local councils fund and equip community centres to provide extra-curricular opportunities to learn green skills, bring awareness to green issues, and offer advice and support on pursuing green jobs.

<sup>23</sup> Quote from a participant.

# Role of local government

Climate change is a complex and multifaceted problem, presenting some of the most profound socio-economic and political challenges of our generation. There is no individual intervention that can single-handedly solve climate change, instead collective action is required from all levels of society. This means that local authorities have an important role to play in the transition to a low carbon economy. Councils possess a range of statutory and non-statutory responsibilities including “soft powers” that can be leveraged to progress the green skills and jobs agenda. They have influence over key areas such as planning, transport and economic development, and possess a deep understanding of local needs and challenges. They are both place-shapers and place-makers and have close ties to local people, businesses and voluntary groups. Moreover, research suggests that councils can play a significant role in reducing carbon emissions in three key areas: 1) retrofitting of homes and buildings; 2) reducing the carbon impact of transport; 3) delivering renewable energy, e.g. through installing solar panels.<sup>24</sup> Mobilising millions of workers to deliver on green projects will require major upskilling efforts and these three areas are seen to harness significant opportunities for jobs and skills.<sup>25</sup>

This section explores some of the powers currently available to local authorities to deliver on green jobs and skills. It begins with an overview of the statutory and non-statutory responsibilities of councils by highlighting relevant literature on this topic. It also looks at different “types” of councils - districts, counties, MCAs and their roles including the benefits of action at different levels. This chapter closes with a discussion of how councils can work with disadvantaged communities to bring forward opportunities.

## London Borough of Lambeth and London Southbank University: Retrofit Skills

- Lambeth Council in partnership with London Southbank University conducted research to understand the local retrofit supply chain and workforce in two main retrofit channels: Public-Procured and Private-Purchased. This involved a gap analysis and evaluation of the roles and skills needed across both channels.
- This piece of work is intended to support the council as part of ongoing retrofit and domestic heat research. It involves ongoing knowledge sharing and development of collaborative programmes with other partners such as the GLA, the LGA, UK Green Building Council, the ADE (Association for Decentralised Energy), Design Council and many others who share the same vision and mission to transform housing stock and achieve net zero.

<sup>24</sup> [Delivering local net zero | Local Government Association](#)  
Case study example in blue box taken from Net Zero Innovation Programme | Local Government Association

<sup>25</sup> [Reaching Net-zero: Green upskilling and the retrofit opportunity | Nesta](#)

# Role of local government

## Duties, powers and statutory responsibilities of councils

Local authorities have a history of addressing environmental and ecological challenges, as well as tackling fuel poverty and air pollution in their areas.<sup>26</sup> However, our research suggests that the role of local government in delivering green jobs and skills has not yet been fully realised. Central government has not offered specific guidance on the full role of local authorities in zero carbon. This has left many councils feeling uncertain about their position in the green skills and jobs agenda.

Significantly, there has been a marked difference between larger councils developing programmes and bidding for funding, and smaller councils who may struggle with resource and capacity. As such, whilst some city-regions have made great strides in addressing environmental issues such as the establishment of Leeds Climate Commission, Greater Manchester's Green Summit and Cornwall's focus on renewable energy, the scale and pace of change is not equal across all regions.

In recent years, climate change has re-emerged at the forefront of the national and local agenda. There is a recognition that government, regional agencies and local authorities need to work together to meet ambitious zero carbon targets. Many councils around the country have already declared a climate emergency and formally adopted at least one new or updated commitment with the aim of reducing emissions at least as quickly as the national net zero target, although these vary in scope.<sup>27</sup> The CCC's report *Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget* (2020) states that local authorities have a mix of statutory and soft powers that can be used to drive sustainable transformations across localities: "Local authority control, leverage and influence spreads out from direct services and contracts through its policy and enforcement duties to its leadership and convening role in the wider area".<sup>28</sup> It adds that: "Local authorities also play a wider enabling and communications role, engaging communities, public sector and business partners in area-wide conversations and about climate change and the route to Net Zero. This impacts on the delivery of skills and jobs which are needed to be ready to tackle the transformation".

26 [The powers local authorities need to deliver on climate | UK100](#)

27 [Local-government-and-net-zero-in-England.pdf \(nao.org.uk\)](#)

28 [Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)

# Role of local government

## Case Study – West of England Combined Authority Action to Deliver Green Jobs and Skills

### Introduction

In July 2019, the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) declared a climate emergency, with the aim of transitioning the region to becoming net zero by 2030, 20 years ahead of the UK Government's target. Meeting net zero will require fundamental shifts across all areas of the economy including transport, power, industry and the natural environment. In order to reach the region's 2030 target, the West of England Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) is being implemented across the local economy.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the national and regional employment markets has accelerated the need to support the growth of new green sectors and therefore new 'green' jobs, whilst enabling existing sectors to transition to low carbon. This means facilitating green jobs and enabling existing sectors to transition to low-carbon ways of working.

In declaring this climate emergency, WECA has designed an evolving programme of works to help meet the region's Climate Emergency 2030 target. It is clear to the combined authority that those targets cannot be achieved without a skilled workforce. The provision of a skilled workforce is central to the delivery of net zero which means there is a need to upskill the current workforce and engage the next generation of workers. Bringing together local employers, skills providers and other stakeholders to help residents to develop the skills they need to achieve their potential is a core priority.

### The programme

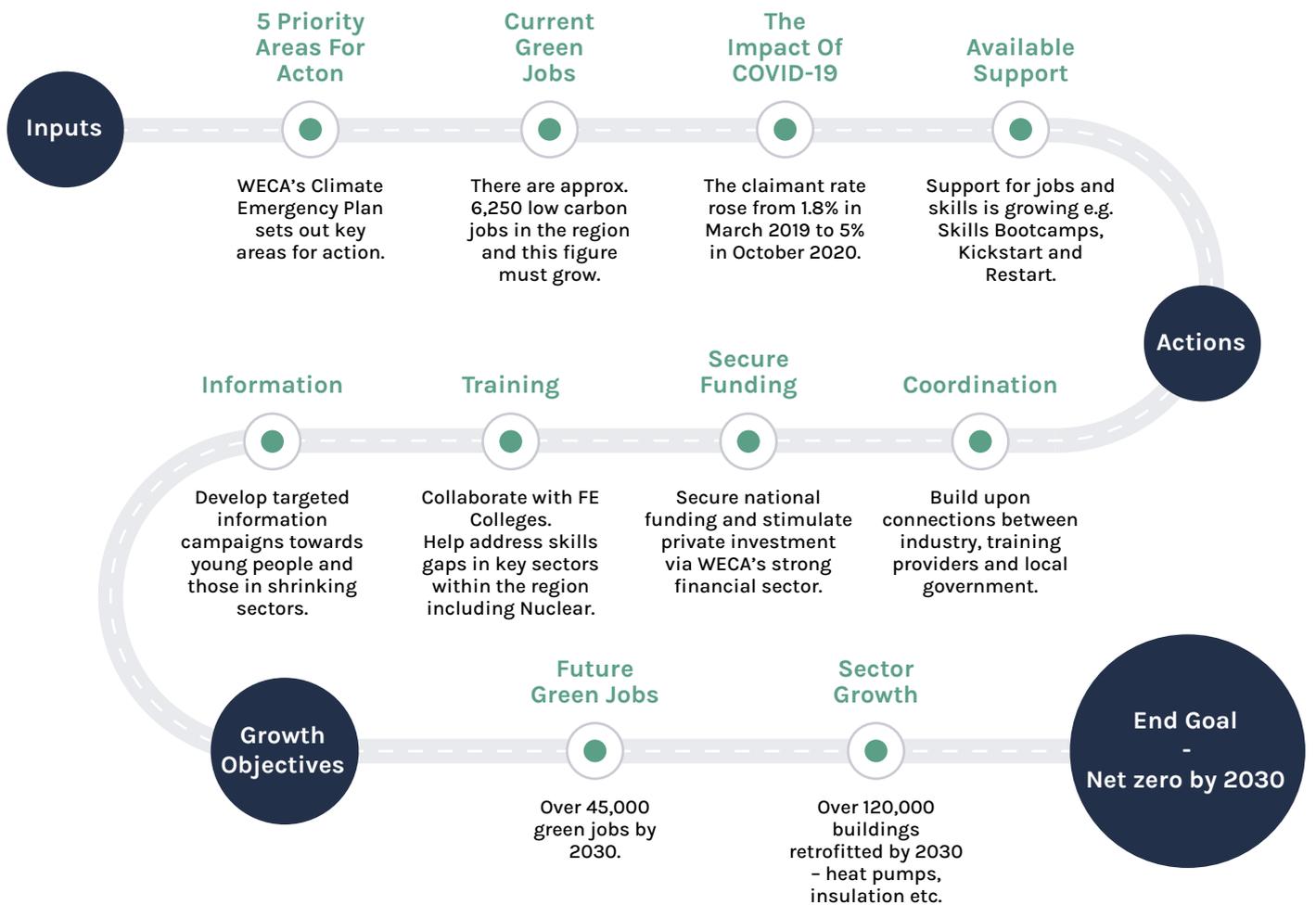
The multi-faceted programme that has been created by the combined authority, recognises that the local workforce will need to possess the skills and qualifications required for the jobs of the future. This has been built from an evidence base and a series of conversations with partners through a green skills commission. To date it has involved identifying future green skills needs and understanding what needs to be done to provide workers with skills in emerging technologies.

In breaking down what was required to meet these targets, the combined authority commissioned two reports. The first report, 'Retrofit Skills Market Analysis' identified that low carbon jobs represented less than 1% of all current jobs in the region, and in order to meet net zero by 2030, 50,000 new jobs would be required. The second report 'Green Skills Market Analysis' identified that 45,000 new green jobs will be required by 2030 across all sectors including: low carbon services (green finance, digital, legal etc), environmental consulting, engineering, construction, transport and low carbon electricity to name but a few.

Linked to the above, the reports set out 'Pathways to Change' which identify a range of actions which need to be addressed in order to meet the skills requirements of net zero. Such actions include securing funding, providing information/support, training provision, coordination of activities and joining up government, activities, industry and training.

# Role of local government

## Pathway to Change WECA Green Skills Market



# Role of local government

## Lessons learnt

Key to establishing this overall strategy with green jobs and skills at its heart has been four core factors.

**Political leadership** – The Mayor pledged in his [manifesto](#) to deliver green recovery through Green Recovery Fund, to create local jobs, support local supply chains, restore our natural environment, combat climate change, and improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

**Robust evidence base** – WECA understood from an early stage that the transition towards net zero would require fundamental shifts across all areas of the economy including transport, power, industry and the natural environment. A range of stakeholders (from industry membership organisations, Local Authorities, education providers, transport providers, solar technologies installers, businesses linked to retrofit through to and other green products and services) were consulted as part of the Retrofit and Green Skills reports. Their own knowledge, evidence and research helped to inform the reports and recommendations. These organisations are continuing to help inform, shape and deliver projects, initiatives and programmes.

**Dedicated funding** – this commitment has been backed by a £50m green recovery fund (announced on 9 December 2021), and there is potential to further expand skills activities linked to this through, for example, the Adult Education Budget. The first scheme to get the go-ahead under this fund is £3.5m to increase the pace and scale of retrofitting. This will include a skills response and link to other skills programmes already established such as the £8m Workforce for the Future programme (an SME skills support service), £3.6m Future Bright (in-work progression support service for individuals) and the £2m Digital Skills Investment Programme (supporting individuals to increase their digital capabilities including in green jobs).

**Working closely with partners** – key to the delivery of green skills programmes to enable green jobs is the relationship with local employers as well as education and training providers. This has and continues to involve a range of activities such as briefing strategic groups (e.g. Skills Advisory Panel, the LEP, Business and Skills Board, Local Authority Skills Officer Group etc), working with educational partners (for example, to understand their work around green curriculum audits), and facilitating multi-partner site visits (for example at a recent skills summit, to a motor vehicle workshop to understand skills and technologies required for electric vehicle charging points).

# Role of local government

## Ambitions for the future

The combined authority continues to develop new ideas to address this priority using conversations and relationships with grass root organisations to understand the needs of local communities. These include:

- Help for businesses to upskill their workforces and support residents into work through programmes like [Workforce for the Future](#) and [Future Bright](#) and AEB funded training.
  - Development of a West of England retrofit scheme - using green recovery funding, for example, to stimulate demand and deliver retrofit training and provision within the region.
  - Grass roots, community-based projects (to be delivered via the Community Support Fund), which address the disproportionate impacts of Covid on the most vulnerable. Interventions will be focused on building social cohesion through projects including green and environmental.
  - Work with education providers to embed green skills within their curricula and provide more targeted green skills courses.
  - Creation of a 'Green Futures Fund' enabling the Careers Hub, schools and colleges to pilot innovative green careers projects.
- Work with employers to identify training and employment opportunities for local residents.
  - Working with government to shape future skills provision to address skills provision gaps.
  - Continuing to deliver business support programmes via the Growth Hub such as the Green Business Grants and Carbon Survey and Decarbonisation Reports.



# Role of local government

## Varying roles of councils

However, not all councils have equal responsibilities. For instance, combined authorities possess a broader range of powers to influence employment, business development and further education and skills in comparison to district councils. Some councils possess less expertise and capacity to engage with zero carbon. They can spend considerable time and resource extrapolating information from national to local data, dealing with contradictory information and working out what they should do.<sup>29</sup> However, councils have the power to educate their own staff about carbon zero, the required actions and the potential role that councils can play in driving a broader emergency response.<sup>30</sup> This could include for example Carbon Literacy training within the council, developing new approaches to decision-making and ways to engage elected members and all levels of officers. Councils can also take strong and immediate action on their own infrastructure, including the energy it buys, the buildings it uses, the roof space potentials for PV, and divestment of its own assets.<sup>31</sup>

Some responsibilities over climate change can be split or shared across local authorities and other agencies, so there is a strong case for councils to work together to share knowledge and best practice. A good example of joint working has been demonstrated by Torbay Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council who joined forces to arrange Carbon Literacy Training for 48 key officers, senior leaders and key councillors across the three regions.<sup>32</sup>

### Torbay Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council: Joint Carbon Literacy Training

- Torbay and South Hams are neighbouring authorities and South Hams and West Devon share a staff base, so collaborating on Carbon Literacy Training was not only cost effective, but mixing staff had the added benefit of improving cross boundary working.
- Recognised that delivering carbon neutrality cannot be done by a handful of officers/members but requires a shift in culture across organisations.
- Arranged training for larger cohorts, and *Speak Carbon* were chosen to deliver it.
- Ran doodle polls to find staff availability and used combined data to create three, two-hour sessions.
- Word of mouth travelled across the organisation resulting in better engagement from other members of staff.

29 [Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget - Climate Change Committee \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://theccc.org.uk/)

30 <https://cat.org.uk/info-resources/zero-carbon-britain/research-reports/zero-carbon-britain-rising-to-the-climate-emergency/>

31 <https://cat.org.uk/info-resources/zero-carbon-britain/research-reports/zero-carbon-britain-rising-to-the-climate-emergency/>

32 [Torbay Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council: Joint Carbon Literacy Training | Local Government Association](#)

# Role of local government

The Climate Change Committee (CCC) states that current powers and levers alone are “unlikely to be sufficient to deliver local authorities’ Net Zero ambitions, due to gaps in powers, policy and funding barriers, and a lack of capacity and skills at a local level.”<sup>33</sup> It calls on government to introduce a duty for local authorities to act on net zero within a common reporting system.<sup>34</sup> The CCC also lists a series of recommendations for local authorities, including the establishment of climate action plans, upskilling council teams, developing green finance know-how, and collaborating with neighbouring authorities. UK100 Power Shift echoes these recommendations and calls for the creation of a Net Zero Delivery that “should align and clarify national, sub-national, regional and local delivery roles and areas for collaboration.”<sup>35</sup> It should provide clear outcomes and direction to reduce uncertainty, provide additional powers where needed, identify public and private investment and enable flexible delivery at the faster pace of ambitious areas”.

Core to all of these reports is that ambiguity should not be a reason for inactivity and that ongoing dialogue will help to define action where it can best be delivered.

## Working with partners

Local authorities making most progress to understand green job demand in their locality and therefore the longer-term skills need are working closely with partners across education, industry, voluntary sector, trade unions and with other local anchor organisations and neighbouring councils.

The Centre for Alternative Technology suggests that councils can also deliver more by working “sideways” – leading by example to encourage others to act.<sup>36</sup> This includes sharing their achievements to date with nearby councils, councils they work with, council networks such as the LGA, and local authority membership groups such as ADEPT.<sup>37</sup> This allows for more open communication between a broader range of players to share knowledge on what works and what doesn’t. This can save councils considerable time and expertise by learning from existing cases of best practice.

From an education perspective, little is offered through the curriculum on the green skills agenda. The Association of Colleges, University and College Union and Students Organising for Sustainability UK are calling for “major new investment in further education to close the skills gap that is rapidly widening across the low carbon sectors” to build in the capacity needed to support green skills pathways.<sup>38</sup> Teach the Future also calls for climate learning to be embedded in all areas of the curriculum to ensure long term knowledge and skill acquisition.<sup>39</sup> Councils and education at all levels can work closely together to develop an evidence base of industry and community needs to advance the skills required to progress green jobs.

33 [Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)

34 [Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)

35 [The Net Zero Strategy and local government: do commitments meet calls for change? | UKERC | The UK Energy Research Centre](#)

36 [Zero Carbon Britain: Rising to the Climate Emergency - Centre for Alternative Technology \(cat.org.uk\)](#)

37 [Zero Carbon Britain: Rising to the Climate Emergency - Centre for Alternative Technology \(cat.org.uk\)](#)

38 [Green Skills - Green Jobs | Association of Colleges \(aoc.co.uk\)](#)

39 [Teach the Future: Campaign for climate education](#)

# Role of local government

## Langport Town Council and Huish Episcopi Parish Council: Climate Action Forum

- In 2020, Langport Town Council and Huish Episcopi Parish Council set up an online forum to engage and swap climate adaptation ideas with more than 20 other parish councils that share the fragile ecology of the Somerset Levels.
- Set up a forum via Zoom and approached 26 parish councils within a ten-mile radius of Langport and Huish Episcopi.
- Held five climate forums so far and more than ten parish councils regularly attend to hear talks and give presentations. Each forum is chaired by a different parish council.
- This has created momentum among participating councils. They have begun using the online mapping website *Parish Online* to record the number of solar panels and ecology projects in each parish.

Industry partners are also crucial in this equation. Engaging with businesses and business representative organisations to understand their future plans for investment and linked workforce requirements is required. This will not only support the development of an evidence base, but it will provide local intelligence for the development of funding bids and proposals as well as understand where the focus for engagement should be. Make UK for example have devised a set of “Green Skills Guiding Principles” to support the transition to a digital and green future.<sup>40</sup>

The voluntary sector is central to advancing opportunities within communities to support greater diversity in the sector. Councils should work closely with their voluntary sector partners to understand needs at a grass root level, communicate more effectively and change perceptions of green jobs as a viable career pathway.

Trade Unions have also been identified as active players supporting green jobs and skills. They advocate good pay and conditions which is essential in ensuring good jobs can attract and populate the green workforce. By encouraging this, it will begin to ensure that workers and communities can make informed choices about future careers.<sup>41</sup>

Anchor institutions or organisations “tied to a particular place by their mission, histories, physical assets and local relationships” often have large buying power and an ability to make an impact on local supply chains, local jobs and skills development to meet that demand.<sup>42</sup> Working closely with councils and other anchors to develop a greater understanding of skills need across individual and collective estates for example is a way to embed ambitions locally.

40 [Green Skills Guiding Principles | Make UK](#)

41 [Working on change.pdf \(green-alliance.org.uk\)](#)

42 [What is an anchor institution? | CLES](#)

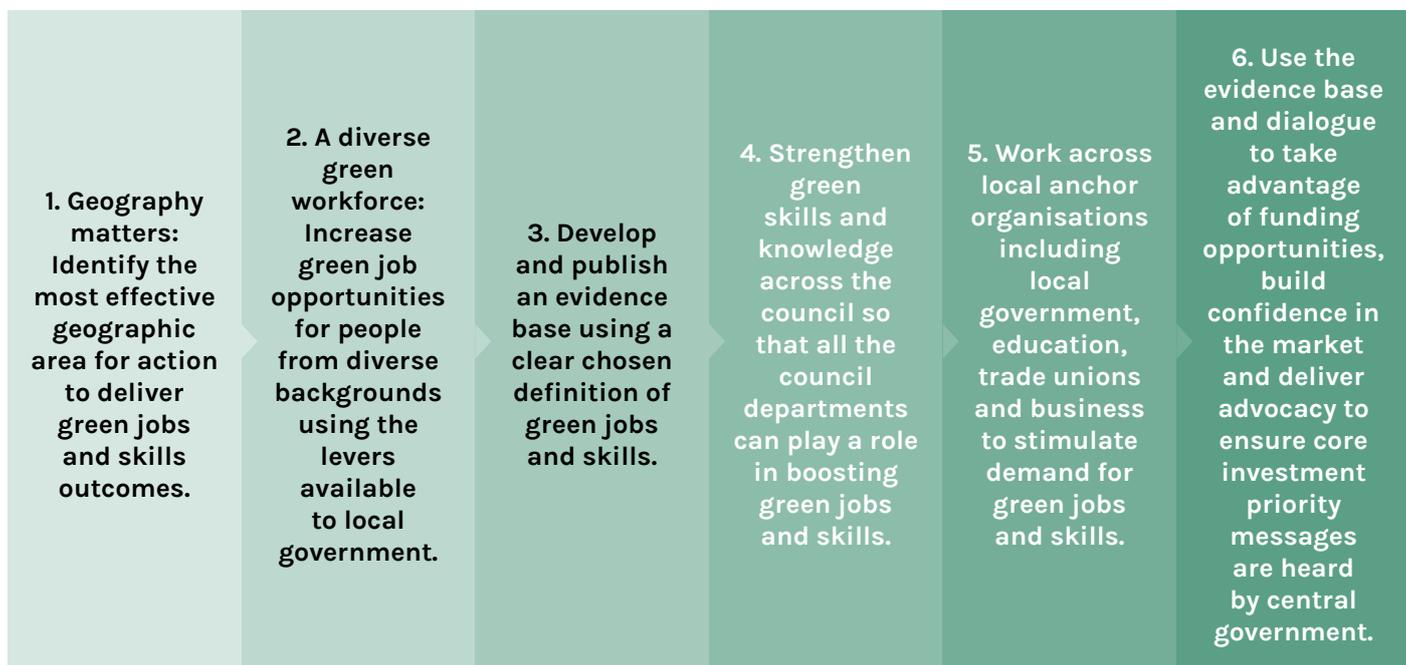
# Where local government can have impact: Our recommendations

As identified through this report so far, there are many ways in which councils and their partners can work together to achieve more outcomes relating to green jobs and skills. These recommendations are built from the literature review, conversations and roundtables and with guidance from the Reference Group. They build on a core set of actions which are designed to support councils deliver ambitions around green jobs and skills. In each recommendation, wider partners relevant for that set of actions is identified. These actions are intended to be used by councils to make progress.

These six recommendations come with a set of actions which can be taken in order to advance positive climate change through the development and delivery of opportunities for communities, with industry and by using the considerable influence that councils have in their locality.

- 1** Geography matters: Identify the most effective geographic area for action to deliver green jobs and skills outcomes. Develop a governance arrangement to deliver across respective actions.
- 2** A diverse green workforce: Increase green job opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds using the levers available to local government including procurement, social value and by working with local education providers, employers and grassroots networks.
- 3** Develop and publish an evidence base using a clear chosen definition of green jobs and skills, which sets out challenges, opportunities and growth needs across industries for the locality. This should be developed with key partners across an economic geography which makes sense to the locality and positions opportunities within the wider sub region.
- 4** Strengthen green skills and knowledge across the council so that all council departments can play a role in boosting green jobs and skills.
- 5** Work across local anchor organisations including local government, education, trade unions and business to stimulate demand and pathways for green jobs and skills. Consider doing this through a green skills taskforce or similar entity to drive change.
- 6** Use the evidence base and dialogue to take advantage of funding opportunities, build confidence in the market and deliver advocacy to ensure core investment priority messages are heard by central government.

# Where local government can have impact: Our recommendations



## Recommendations and how to get there

In this section we set out each recommendation alongside a number of actions to support the advancement of delivering green jobs and skills targets. It is recommended that these actions are delivered, where appropriate and convened by local government involving partners such as education institutions and local businesses.



# Where local government can have impact: Our recommendations

## 1. Geography matters: Identify the most effective geographic area for action to deliver green jobs and skills outcomes. Develop a governance arrangement to deliver across respective actions.

Many of the people interviewed as part of this research highlighted the link between the levels of local government, statutory responsibility and the ability to deliver action across jobs and skills. By understanding the evidence base and identifying where action is best taken, councils can work in partnership at the right governance level to affect change. As seen in the case study for the West of England Combined Authority, Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs), with the political backing of a mayor can be powerful at a strategic level. This clarity of approach with an understanding of what action can be delivered at what geographical level has the potential to make greater progress. This may be across procurement, social value or with tools available by different parts of local government.

This should not however detract from the work that can be done at a smaller geographical level or within different parts of local government such as district or borough councils. Knowledge at a hyper local level is valuable for understanding the needs of communities and the types of grass roots organisations that can reach those communities is key.

Developing a governance arrangement that allows each part of local government to act in a way which draws on their strengths will help to identify where action is best delivered. While the recently published [Net Zero strategy](#) does not fully realise the extent of action required in order to accelerate decarbonisation, it does identify the creation of a helpful tool – local net zero forum. This could provide an opportunity to explore green jobs and skills while addressing wider climate change needs and if replicated at a local level, could highlight local issues to government. It will also serve to address the jobs which are in deficit i.e. retrofitting.

### Actions required to progress:

- Engage with neighbouring councils to identify existing action which can be delivered at scale and identify gaps in provision leading from the evidence base creation.
- In areas with multiple levels of local government, convene discussions between mayoral combined authorities, counties, unitaries and district councils to identify where action is best delivered.
- Work with communities at a grass roots level to design and develop local solutions can deliver bespoke solutions to place-based issues.
- Revise procurement policies and practices to embed opportunities to create green jobs and work with suppliers to identify skills needs.
- Develop green jobs and skills through social value obligations to drive ambition for local supply chains.
- Identify tools and levers such as the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to direct flexible funding to green skills development.

# Where local government can have impact: Our recommendations

## 2. A diverse green workforce: Increase green job opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds using the levers available to local government including procurement, social value and by working with local education providers, employers and grassroots networks.

Research has shown that environment, sustainability and green skills are the second least diverse vocational pathway areas in the UK, only behind farming. In addition to this, research conducted by IEMA, SOS-UK and the Equalities Trust found only 3.1% of environment professionals identify as ethnic minorities.

Further compounding the availability of green skills and talent is a similar lack of diversity in roles requiring for example but not exclusively STEM – an important dimension of the future green economy. This also extends to the green careers which do not require STEM skills, but which are central to making progress on environmental improvements such as green finance, community engagement for green developments etc. A lack of concerted effort to diversify the sector leaves a huge proportion of the country whose skills and abilities are untapped. While the Government's commitment to increase diversity and inclusion in the green workforce is welcome, the plans are not sufficiently robust to accelerate growth and take up of green jobs and skills. A recent [Parliamentary report](#) into the skills gaps to deliver net zero recommended that government must set out its aims in a measurable way and have a metric for tracking diversity and inclusion.

Part of the challenge identified within this research is that there aren't enough role models from diverse backgrounds working within sectors most likely to generate opportunities for green growth. Also, that the opportunities that are available are often unpaid or paid at a low level which means that people from more disadvantaged backgrounds are not in a position to explore these pathways into a future career. Finally, the availability of information about green jobs is poor as highlighted in the earlier case study roundtable with Voyage Youth.

But what is the role of partners in addressing this shortfall? Improving diversity among the green job workforce can be tackled by extending existing local initiatives to improve diversity in other areas of work. This includes local supply-side initiatives with schools and colleges to encourage more under-represented students (i.e. women and BME students) to consider green careers and skills pathways to those careers. This can be done through Diversity Bursaries which can support apprentices from historically disadvantaged groups to access and participate in the green economy.<sup>43</sup> It can also include work with local employers to ensure that green jobs are showcased in programmes which enable under-represented groups to get work experience and access job opportunities. Understanding the mismatch of opportunities locally and engaging with the grass root networks will be key for improving the understanding and access to pathways. This needs to be coupled with the recommendations to work across education and business to understand the demand locally for green careers, working with and alongside community partners to match supply and demand.

<sup>43</sup> EMERGENCY\_PLAN\_GREEN\_JOBS\_FEB\_2021.pdf (friendsoftheearth.uk)

# Where local government can have impact: Our recommendations

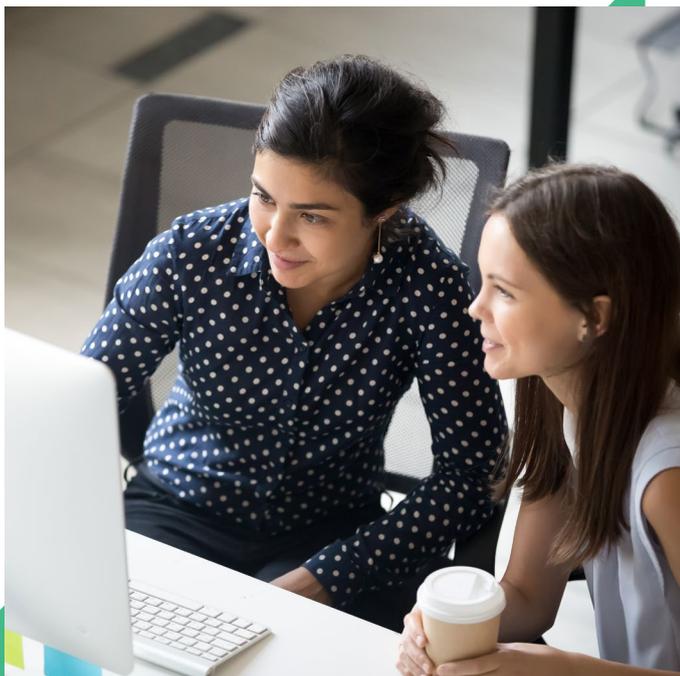
Actions required to progress:

- Identify and work more closely with grass root organisations to expand the knowledge of different communities around green jobs and skills and build pathways and programmes.
- Extend existing programmes of paid internships and work experience between education and industry to include green jobs.
- Encourage diversity in funding bids, through social value aims and procurement to further develop supply chains.
- Create role model programmes to promote green jobs and skills to a more diverse workforce.
- Develop a programme for more educators and mentors / ambassadors to deliver green skills and careers pathways.

## **3. Develop and publish an evidence base using a clear chosen definition of green jobs and skills, which sets out challenges, opportunities and growth needs across industries for the locality. This should be developed across an economic geography with key partners which makes sense to the locality and positions opportunities within the wider sub region.**

Understanding that potential and using evidence to promote green jobs and skills will be an essential component to delivering against this opportunity. While net zero is a UK-wide policy, that the impact of the transition to decarbonisation will not fall evenly across the country, but that every region in the UK will have at least one major strategic opportunity to deliver green jobs and skills.

The creation of a local evidence base is therefore required to support an accelerated pace of change by giving councils a robust baseline and employers the confidence to invest in the workforce and technology required to deliver decarbonisation. Where it exists, it is a powerful tool that can be used proactively to promote interest and investment in green jobs. The evidence base at a local level needs to be built up to demonstrate the potential for delivering against green pathways. It will also provide a basis for dialogue between partners across the system to drive action.



# Where local government can have impact: Our recommendations

Places dependent on high levels of employment across carbon-intensive economies for example will have a higher demand for skills in the short-term as industry moves towards carbon reduction. Places with a less apparent industry requirements will benefit from evidence base development to identify where action to stimulate green jobs and therefore the pipeline of green skills needs to focus.

A good example of this has been set out in the [LGA and Ecuity report](#) (2021), which predicts that across the Midlands, there could be an estimated 194,000 jobs working in low-carbon sectors. Most of these jobs would be focused on manufacturing low emission vehicles, battery packs and modules in giga factories situated near existing production sites. In London and the south of England, an estimated 447,000 jobs could be supported to deliver the transition to net zero. Many of these jobs will be in the financial, IT or legal sector supporting low-carbon activity. This is due to the strong service sector in the London and south England regions. This evidence is essential in setting the parameters for action to bring forward green jobs and skills and using local intelligence to convene conversations with a range of partners.

One tool to promote green jobs and skills will be the creation of local skills improvement plans (LSIPs), which are set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper. These are intended to identify the needs of employers and match or stimulate provision through the local education base. LSIPs, however, will only be capable of delivering green jobs and skills if local employers can identify the potential for growth within their sectors.

Actions required to progress:

- Create a local evidence base which draws on economic data to understand the capacity for green jobs and skills and supports the production of a baseline.
- Work closely with local businesses, chambers of commerce, trades associations and education sector to translate this baseline into actionable priorities which reflects high quality business intelligence.
- Identify within the baseline geographical and sector opportunities to bring forward green jobs and align with skills provision.
- Establish a governance framework for example a Green Skills Taskforce with external industry experts, academia and trade unions to develop an action plan, identifying quick wins and pilot projects to bring forward opportunities for green jobs growth.
- Produce an annual report setting out how green jobs and skills outcomes meet ambitions and publish success stories and lessons learnt for the wider sector.

# Where local government can have impact: Our recommendations

## 4. Strengthen green skills and knowledge across the council so that all council departments can play a role in boosting green jobs and skills.

From an organisational perspective, research has shown that many organisations lack the skills, knowledge and expertise to embed green jobs and skills internally within existing roles as well as new roles. This includes many of the councils interviewed as part of this research.

In recent [roundtable discussions](#), led by ADEPT, participants concluded “that ambitions to reach net zero by 2050 will be held back if local authorities are not better equipped with more staff, capacity and knowledge to be able to deliver”. The Centre for Alternative Technology report Zero Carbon Britain 2019 also suggested that “councils need to educate their own staff about the climate emergency, its causes, the potential actions and the role the council can play in driving a broader climate emergency response”. This is understood however to be less of a challenge across the private sector where more competitive salaries can be offered, and investment can be made without impacting spend across the public purse.

This research also found that where expertise in local government does exist, it is often not well-spread across policy areas and often specialist roles required in for example conservation planning do not constitute full-time jobs. While job sharing across councils is in place in some areas, it is difficult to achieve positive outcomes in a wide geography with different political control or senior officer reporting lines.

**"A lot of the teams were really depleted; lack of capacity has been an issue. The people who are there are really dedicated and committed but there's only so many hours in the day. Climate emergencies have helped. You really need a director/ senior management level to buy into it and understand the importance of it"**

**Third sector representative**

# Where local government can have impact: Our recommendations

The opportunity which comes with this recommendation is that the greater the skills and knowledge that is developed, the greater the impact councils will have. A clear set of policies, statements and ambitions that is translated through councils' supply chains, procurement practices as well as through social value will encourage others to follow suit.

Actions required to progress:

- Carry out an audit of the green skills present in your council and close the gaps in knowledge and expertise.
- Develop organisational knowledge by talking to businesses which are active in the green economy and by learning from other councils.
- Appoint a lead cabinet member to the green jobs and skills agenda to work across climate change, economic development and skills portfolios.
- Embed understanding of zero carbon and sustainability throughout the council e.g. through council-wide training particularly aligned to new statutory duties for biodiversity and ecology and carbon literacy training to officers and members (see case study on page 20).
- Identify opportunities for job sharing roles requiring green skills between authorities where a FTE is not required or unaffordable.
- Host an annual green jobs fair to raise the profile of employers leading the way and encouraging career development among residents.

## 5. Work across local anchor organisations including local government, education, trade unions and business to stimulate demand for green jobs and skills. Consider doing this through a green skills taskforce or similar entity to drive change.

The current national curriculum is reported to be outdated with more of a focus on the pre-green skills agenda. A 2019 [YouGov survey](#) reported that circa 70% of teachers polled said that there should be more teaching about climate change in UK schools. However, 75% said that they did not feel that they had received adequate training to educate students on this subject. The poll went on to confirm that around 70% agreed that radical change was needed to make the education system “fit for the times we live in”.

This is consistent with the recommendations made by the [Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity](#) (CUSP) to embed the net zero goal in the national curriculum across all stages of education from primary to tertiary education as well as reflect in teaching qualifications and reform apprenticeship standards and mid-career reskilling.

Education & Training Foundation (ETF) conducted a survey on the curriculum which found that less than 1% of college courses available to students in the UK are focused on embedding green skills, the climate emergency or carbon literacy.

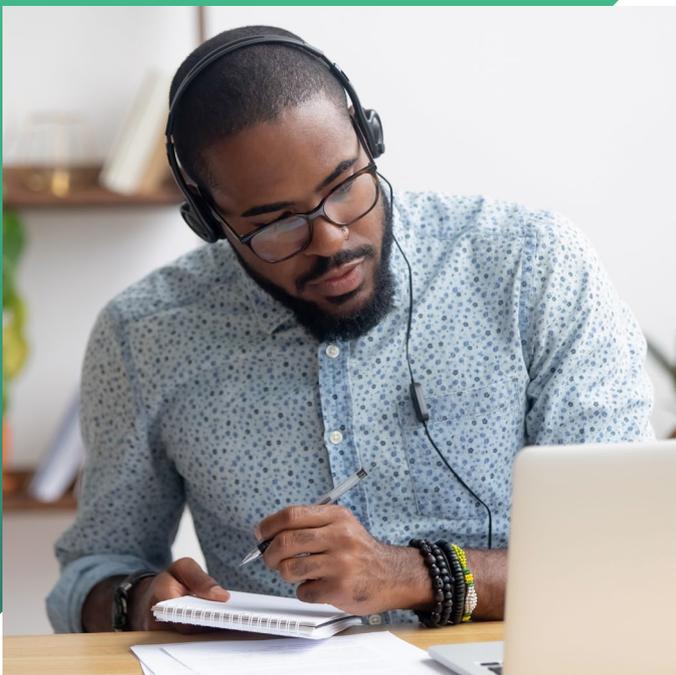
# Where local government can have impact: Our recommendations

This is echoed through career pathways where there is a mismatch between green jobs and an understanding of the careers available to individuals. These rarely promote the opportunities represented by green jobs and having a good careers service is therefore as important for adults as it is for young people, especially for those who will be looking for re-training opportunities.

The role of local government and public spending more broadly is to connect the opportunities from their own supply chains, through their procurement powers and through social value to deliver more. Significant budgets across the public sector and amongst anchor institutions locally should provide ample platforms for investment and a common purpose.

Actions required to progress:

- Ensure all educators and careers advisors fully encompass the potential for green skills and green jobs and places as high a value on these as it places to more traditional career paths (e.g. attending university).
- Audit and publish local availability of bite-sized courses and close gaps in the local offer.
- Develop and execute a campaign to stimulate interest in green jobs and encourage a focus on employees in-work to upskill in green areas.
- Map apprenticeship standards to green jobs to encourage a broader career path of green jobs across all sectors as is already being done across the construction sector.<sup>44</sup>
- Engage with careers teams in local enterprise partnerships and schools to develop an ambition locally for better understanding of green jobs potential.
- Use anchor status to drive effective use of buying powers and requirements for green jobs in waste, retrofit and asset management.



<sup>44</sup> [Green apprenticeships advisory panel / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#)

# Where local government can have impact: Our recommendations

## 6. Use the evidence base and dialogue to take advantage of funding opportunities, build confidence in the market and deliver advocacy to ensure core investment priority messages are heard by central government.

An area frequently highlighted during the research has been the challenge of building a long-term plan of action given the plethora of somewhat fragmented investment programmes in green initiatives to support wider climate change ambitions.

Several interviewees mentioned that tight budgets and short-term funding have been a significant barrier to delivering more outcomes for green skills and jobs. Others mentioned a lack of understanding or expertise within councils themselves about what green jobs and skills are, and how they could be implemented.

**"Councils are having to "chase the cash" at the moment which isn't conducive or long-term or strategic planning"**

**Combined Authority representative**

The National Audit Office (2021) also found that dedicated grant funding for local authority work on net zero increased significantly in 2020-21 but remains short-term. The nature of grant funding as opposed to long-term, multi-year, strategic funding can also hinder value for money. While competitive processes can help focus funding on the best projects, a fragmented funding landscape dominated by competitive funds brings the risk that money does not go to where the need or opportunity is greatest, and it can make it difficult for local authorities to plan for the long term.

Ensuring opportunities to deliver green jobs and skills should be considered as part of a broader investment framework, (supported by the evidence base identified in recommendation one) will deliver more benefits. This investment framework or portfolio could come in the form of future devolution deals, county deals or levers anticipated through the Levelling Up White Paper.

Actions required to progress:

- Use the evidence base to develop business cases for investment capitalising on future opportunities such as UK Shared Prosperity Fund and develop a pipeline of career pathways.
- Identify future opportunities through for example the levelling up white paper to embed green jobs and skills projects.
- Include green jobs and skills ambitions and costed programmes in future devolution deals such as county deals to deliver a long-term plan of action (ref WECA case study).
- Where appropriate work with mayoral combined authorities and organisation such as Midland Engine to explore, develop and tap into new sources of funding.

# Appendix 1 – further research

## Further analysis on the role of local government

For a brief period between 2008-2011 local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships (LEPs) signed up to report to deliver against national performance indicators relating to climate change:<sup>45</sup>

- NI185: reducing carbon emission from local authority activities
- NI186: reducing carbon emissions from across the local authority area
- NI188: adapting to climate change.

The removal of these indicators in 2011, removed the duty for local authorities to tackle carbon emissions and the duty to report on it. Without reporting in place, government had no evidence of the actions that local authorities were taking to combat climate change, making their contributions practically invisible.<sup>46</sup>

Figure 1 demonstrates the statutory responsibilities of different types of councils to influence emissions, jobs and skills.<sup>47</sup>

**Figure 1**

Councils in England	Number	Responsibility
District Council	192	Building Regulations, Council tax and business rates, Planning, Housing, Parking, Waste collection, Environmental Health, Economic Development, Sports centres, parks and playing fields
County Council	26	Highways, street lighting, traffic management, Passenger transport and transport planning, Strategic Planning, Waste disposal, Parking, Emergency Planning, Trading Standards (including Energy Performance Certificates), Education, Economic development, Public Health, Social Services
Unitary & Metropolitan	55 & 36	All of the above
London Boroughs & City	32	All of the above
Scottish Councils	32	All of the above
Welsh Councils	22	All of the above
Northern Ireland	11	Housing, Planning, Improving & maintaining regional & local roads, Libraries, Environmental Protection, Waste collection
Combined Authorities	10 plus GLA	Varies due to devolution deals but can include: Transport, Spatial Planning, Environment Strategy, Employment and business development, Mayoral Development Corporations, Further Education & Skills

<sup>45</sup> [The powers local authorities need to deliver on climate | UK100](#)

<sup>46</sup> [The powers local authorities need to deliver on climate | UK100](#)

<sup>47</sup> [Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)

# Appendix 1 – further research

The general powers of local authorities can be used in a number of areas to support climate action and advance green skills and jobs. The General Power of Competence (GPOC), section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 states that: “A local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do”.<sup>48</sup> GPOC also enables local authorities to have:

- (a) power to do it anywhere in the United Kingdom or elsewhere;
- (b) power to do it for a commercial purpose or otherwise for a charge, or without charge; and
- (c) power to do it for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.

The GPOC sought to encourage councils to move away from a tradition mode of thinking of ‘no can do’ to a more innovative and entrepreneurial approach to public service delivery. The GPOC can be a useful mechanism to encourage decision-makers within councils to pursue new and innovative actions that they may not have felt confident to pursue in the past.

The introduction of The Local Government Act in 2000 placed increased emphasis on local government to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of its local area.<sup>49</sup> Significantly, the Act introduced a new power for local authorities, outlined in Section 2(1) which pointed out that, provided it is not specifically prohibited by other legislation: “every local authority is to have the power to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve any one or more of the following objectives:<sup>50</sup>

- the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area;
- the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area;
- the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area.

This power re-directed the focus of local authorities from their immediate service delivery functions to the wider ‘wellbeing’ of their areas.<sup>51</sup> Importantly, carrying out activities that contribute positively to net zero either through direct or indirect means has a positive contribution on the environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of an area. A number of recent documents have noted that whilst the general powers and responsibilities of local authorities can be used to address climate change, there is no overarching obligation to do so.<sup>52,53</sup> This can make it even more difficult for local authorities to understand how they can deliver green jobs and skills in their area.

48 [Localism Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

49 [Local Government Act 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

50 \*Microsoft Word - 01\_12 Fudge Peters Wade Locating local authority agencies.docx (surrey.ac.uk)

51 \*Microsoft Word - 01\_12 Fudge Peters Wade Locating local authority agencies.docx (surrey.ac.uk)

52 [The powers local authorities need to deliver on climate | UK100](#)

53 [Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)

# Appendix 1 – further research

## Further research into the definitions of "Green Jobs"

Winter and Moore (2013) have argued that whilst agriculture may be considered as the “greenest” sector in Canada because of the proportion of “green” workers it employs, it is also one of the least environmentally friendly sectors in Canada due its intensive use of energy and greenhouse gas emissions. The Worldwatch Institute has argued that a more pragmatic way to define green jobs is to focus on the *process* and the *actions* of decarbonising as opposed to a utopian vision of what a green future might look like, e.g., one that does not generate any waste or pollution. The Worldwatch Institute therefore defines green jobs as those that “contribute appreciably to maintaining or restoring environmental quality and avoiding future damage to the Earth’s ecosystems.

It is important to recognise that not all jobs currently involved in greening the economy provide good working conditions for workers. For example, though recycling jobs help to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, they are often hazardous, poorly-paid and insecure.<sup>54</sup> As the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work has argued: “We tend to associate the word ‘green’ with safety – but what is good for the environment is not necessarily good for the safety and health of workers who are employed in green jobs... Green jobs need to provide safe, healthy and decent working conditions in order to contribute to a truly smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”.



<sup>54</sup> [Not all green jobs are safe and clean | Financial Times \(ft.com\)](https://www.ft.com/content/2013/05/22/not-all-green-jobs-are-safe-and-clean)