

Investing in a Greener Greater Manchester

Workshop Summary 31 January 2018

Tom Butterworth, WSP introduced the Pro Manchester event which was hosted by Manchester Science Partnerships. Dave Bell of Natural England, outlined the government’s 25 year plan for the environment noting that Natural Capital should be used to inform all decision-making not just in rural areas, but in urban and peri-urban areas. Tom gave an example of Natural Capital providing flood alleviation measures from New York where a green and grey, rather than grey-only solution was used for a development providing a saving of \$1.5bn.

A panel presentation was given by:

Jessica Bowles, Bruntwood; Richard Knight, Peel; Chris Hayes, Skanska and Chris Matthews, United Utilities. The speakers provided short overviews of their company approaches to Green Infrastructure and Natural Capital and the thoughts of GM’s Natural Capital Group. They raised issues including:

- Attributing value to Green Infrastructure – in costs/savings/value to the bottom line and to convince the auditors/accountants.
- Need for clear guidance on how we measure net gain at the city level: setting standard terminology, practical guidelines, common methodologies and a SMART target
- Planning requirements, and clarity from planning policy
- A requirement for a city-wide, area based approach rather than a site-by-site approach
- Issues of viability for some developments
- Development of skills for policy-makers, business leaders, and those installing/maintaining GI
- They provided examples of successful ‘green’ developments
- There was also a focus on lives led, people based development, providing attractive places for people to work and live, and for businesses to invest in and attract the best workforce.

The Green Summit Listening Workshop was facilitated by Louise Marix Evans, Quantum Strategy & Technology Ltd, support the GM Mayor’s Green Summit for a green and carbon neutral city-region.

Participants worked in groups to identify the main barriers to investment and opportunities for investment. They then drew up the main transformative actions to leverage investment in green space and natural capital in the city which formed the main ‘asks’ to the Greater Manchester Mayor.

The top main actions identified were:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce a planning requirement to assess and understand the impact of a development on Natural Capital as well as how that value will be enhanced	GMCA to develop planning policy. Business to carry out Natural Capital assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a toolkit of shared methods and tools to integrate the value of Natural Capital into early planning stages	GMCA to coordinate Businesses to be receptive and trial this, e.g. commitment to the NC Protocol

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Natural Capital metrics for GM model approaches (with examples) 	GMCA & partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National policy to develop measurements and <u>meaningful</u> standards for Net Gain to be reflected in GM and sub-regional policy based on local conditions 	GMCA to develop as a pioneer nationally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate and publish a baseline of Natural Capital value using existing datasets to demonstrate the financial value of Natural Assets and Greenspace 	GM Natural Capital Group, Universities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate young people to develop understanding of natural environment and Business leaders and decision-makers NOW 	Schools, media (BBC e.g Blue Planet) led by the GM Mayor.

A full set of results can be provided as an excel spreadsheet if requested. All the information from the workshop will be collated for analysis in developing the Summit and Environment Charter.

In summary: businesses represented appear to be asking for a strong Greater Manchester-wide Natural Capital policy and investment plan with clear planning requirements, meaningful standards and consistent metrics. They show a willingness to engage in a wider Natural Capital accounting process and require the mapping of priority sites metrics to support them to integrate Natural Capital decision making into the early planning stages. There is a sense they want a level-playing field that is applied consistently by skilled planners and policy-makers working with developers and business to deliver Natural Capital investment across the city-region. In this respect it is really important that businesses have the means to understand Natural Capital and that mechanisms are in place, e.g. through planning requirements, that they can understand and use alongside their own business processes. Increasing skills and understanding of Natural Capital at board-level and in finance decision-makers, as well as within practitioners is also a key action.