

## Visioning Workshop Discussion Group: Green Growth

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### Overview

A visioning workshop was held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 10am – 2pm at Castle Green Hotel in Kendal to inform the development of the Westmorland and Furness Inclusive and Green Economic Growth Strategy. A series of thematic discussion groups – covering people, prosperity, place, green growth and inclusive growth - were ran as part of the session. This note captures the feedback gathered at the table focused on 'green growth'.

### Focus of Discussion

All workshop participants were asked to spend 10-15 minutes at each thematic table. At the green growth table they were asked to consider the following points which had been identified to date in the strategy's underpinning evidence base:

**Table 1: Points to consider relating to Green Growth**

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- There are **various routes to accessing green growth opportunities**:
    - **Identifying the green economy as a priority sector.** This could incorporate new green growth opportunities to pursue and trailblaze (e.g. linked to climate change and biodiversity)
    - **Diversification, innovation and decarbonisation in existing activities** (e.g. agriculture and clean energy) to unlock green growth
    - **Maximising the green impacts and opportunities of planned investment**, including supply chain opportunities
  - **Green skills and green technology requirements need to be identified and understood** as part of horizon scanning activity.
  - **Green finance and place-based impact investment needs to be considered to facilitate green growth**– e.g. securing investment from investors who are not driven by purely commercial returns. E.g. use of Nature Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to enable nature interventions in Cumbria (as part of Borderlands Inclusive Growth natural capital arm) focusing on Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality.
  - **Need for alignment with the Climate Change Action Plan** (Parts 1 and 2) and **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**
  - **Notable green projects:** Omega Proteins (Penrith) opportunity for district heating network; Spirit Energy (Barrow) growth plans around carbon capture and storage linked to the Morecambe Bay Net Zero Project
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Participants were asked to discuss:

- What are the priorities for green growth in W&F?
- How can this be embedded within the strategy?

This note captures the findings of the discussions within the green growth group.

**Table 2: Feedback on points presented on Green Growth**

| Green Growth Consideration  | Notes   |
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| <p>There are <b>various routes to accessing green growth opportunities</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Identifying the green economy as a priority sector.</b> This could incorporate new green growth opportunities to pursue and trailblaze (e.g. linked to climate change and biodiversity)</li> <li>• <b>Diversification, innovation and decarbonisation in existing activities</b> (e.g. agriculture and clean energy) to unlock green growth</li> <li>• <b>Maximising the green impacts and opportunities of planned investment</b>, including supply chain opportunities</li> </ul> | <p>There was a question as to whether it is necessary to specify ‘green growth’, or whether all growth should be green.</p> <p>In relation to decarbonisation, there was a question around how the most polluting businesses can be supported in this area. Linked to this, it was discussed how businesses will have their own strategies for decarbonisation and how can the Council help, rather than dictating to them.</p> <p>There was significant discussion around the transition of traditional activity to new green approaches (with farming being an example given numerous times). This was considered to be a high priority but it was considered that there needed to be changes to the planning process to allow it to happen, with the key issue being objections to development – not being about stifling innovation but about doing things sympathetically (adapting for a future climate).</p> |

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| <p><b>Green skills and green technology requirements need to be identified and understood</b> as part of horizon scanning activity.</p>  | <p>Almost all of the groups mentioned this, to varying extents, focusing on the need to better understand green skills to be able to plan and provide for them in the local workforce. This linked heavily to education and ensuring that local providers are offering learning that aligns with the skills of the future and becoming a centre for excellence and flagship for skills and training.</p> <p>Entrepreneurs were discussed and how to encourage / incentivise them to work and live in the area.</p> <p>A point raised by all groups was around the need for prioritising the retrofitting of whole areas (not individual-driven house by house approach) and the importance of upskilling local people to undertake this. It was considered that there is a focus on ‘big things’ but it doesn’t consider reducing the existing demand by facilitating the move away from traditional fuels.</p> <p>Visitor education was also referenced – leveraging the opportunity provided as a much visited area – the key element will be how this is messaged.</p> |
| <p><b>Green finance and place-based impact investment needs to be considered to facilitate green growth</b>– e.g. securing investment from investors who are not driven by purely commercial returns. E.g. use of Nature Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to enable nature inventions in Cumbria (as part of Borderlands Inclusive Growth natural capital arm) focusing on Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality.</p> | <p>The discussion around funding was primarily focused on the difficulty of securing it.</p>  |
| <p><b>Need for alignment with the Climate Change Action Plan</b> (Parts 1 and 2) and <b>Local Nature Recovery Strategy</b></p>   | <p>A comment was made that there needs to be an awareness of the fact that the climate is changing more quickly than we are identifying solutions.</p> <p>Local Energy Plans also need to be considered, along with National Park Management Plans.</p>   |

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| <p><b>Notable green projects:</b> Omega Proteins (Penrith) opportunity for district heating network; Spirit Energy (Barrow) growth plans around carbon capture and storage linked to the Morecambe Bay Net Zero Project</p> | <p>There was a keen acknowledgement of the need to build on local strengths in the green economy, but also that it is important that the benefit from them is experienced locally and not just exported to other areas and countries. Example given here was 'Nutrient Neutrality' where kit has been developed locally but has been marketed internationally.</p> <p>Reinvention of the area's 'brand' was discussed linked to how you attract and retain younger people / entrepreneurs to the area.</p> <p>A representative commented that cutting edge projects needed to be included in the strategy – examples given were anaerobic digestion, digital dairy chain, wind, solar, tidal etc.</p> <p>The link to sustainable farming needs to be highlighted – local farms have joined up and formed CICs. Green skills need to include rural elements too.</p> <p>Capture United Utilities investment – likely to be multi-billions.</p> |
| <p>The need for support via travel connections.</p>   | <p>Travel options were discussed at length, in their role as an enabler to growth. It is acknowledged that the rurality makes it difficult to move around without a car, but a priority was identified for charging infrastructure, public transport investment and coordinated planning.</p> <p>There needs to be confidence in provision, perception won't change overnight.</p> <p>Linked to funding, it was noted that the area has a lot of car parks that make a healthy surplus. This should be funnelled into improving transport options, rather than into a general improvement pot as previously.</p>  |

## **What are the priorities for green growth in Westmorland and Furness?**

Drawing on information above and wider discussions key priorities are:

- Understanding the green skills required for the future and ensuring education and upskilling of local people to deliver these.
- The need for a regional retrofit strategy to focus on reducing demand as well as on innovation.
- Ensuring that rural skills are also accounted for, with a focus on industries including farming.
- Build on the strengths of the area to evolve the local brand, retaining the younger population and attracting entrepreneurs to the area.

## **How can green growth be embedded in the strategy?**

- The strategy needs to make clear what the role of the Council is and how a partnership approach works
- The strategy needs to recognise there are new green skills and transitional skills and also to be clear about the difference between green skills and green jobs.
- Linked to the question of whether all growth should be green growth, should this be an ambition for the end of the strategy period? A further comment was that green growth should be weaved into everything and shouldn't need its own ambitions.
- There needs to be an understanding of the scope of focus for green growth – is this local or national, as the focus will be different depending on the intended level of impact.
- It was noted that there must be linkages to Cumberland and the forthcoming Devolution Deal.