



GLASGOW GIVES EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE GREEN SECTOR TO PEOPLE WITH A LOW EMPLOYABILITY PROFILE THROUGH A TRAINEESHIP SCHEME WITH THE CITY COUNCIL. THE SCHEME IS ALSO BENEFICIAL TO THE COUNCIL AS IT IS COST NEUTRAL AND THE SAVINGS FROM THE REDUCTIONS OF COUNCIL'S CARBON EMISSIONS OFFSET THE COSTS OF EMPLOYMENT.



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GREENING THE COUNCIL AND BOOSTING EMPLOYABILITY

CONTEXT

Glasgow has long struggled with relatively high unemployment - 9.8% in 2013-2014. Of those people who work, many receive low pay. The problem of exclusion in the city is exacerbated by the fact that many people are offered short term or casual employment. There is a need in the city to improve the work prospects for residents, to enhance living conditions, and reduce poverty.

At the same time, Glasgow's city council aspires to be a leader in terms of sustainability and greening. It has set the ambitious target of reducing its carbon emissions by 30% by 2020. However limited financial and staffing resources are hindering these ambitions.

SOLUTION

The 'Green Wardens' scheme is a traineeship programme within the council's Carbon Management Team (CMT). It aims to build up the skills and expertise of people who have been long term unemployed; early school leavers, young people not in education, training or employment (NEETs), and people recently discharged from the Armed Forces, who need support in transitioning into employment outside of the military. It also provides the council with a motivated staff for its carbon reduction projects.

The programme employs people as 'green wardens' to work across various greening and sustainability projects in the core council services and Arm's Length External Organisations¹² (ALEOs). The scheme employs individuals on fixed term contracts for up to one year, which is seen as a stepping stone to further employment. The green economy is continuously growing and Glasgow already has the highest concentration of renewable energy jobs in Scotland. The scheme is an investment in the future as it supports unemployed people to take advantage of new employment opportunities.

¹² Arm's Length External Organisations are companies, trusts and other bodies that are separate from the local authority but are subject to local authority control or influence, for example 'Glasgow Life' that manages the city's leisure facilities, libraries and museums.

Glasgow City Council also pays the green wardens a 'living wage'. This is a forward thinking trend in the UK, a growing number of local authorities pay more than the minimum wage, which is currently not high enough to cover living expenses. The council instead uses the 'living wage' as a minimum benchmark, which is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK. This ensures quality employment.

The wardens complete a two week introductory training programme, which includes an induction to council activities and its carbon reduction targets. Participants are also trained in using the council's energy management software, energy and waste surveying, and audit report writing.



The wardens are then assigned to support carbon reduction projects across the council. The examples of activities include:

- Carrying out energy audits to identify potential energy savings in specific departments. The audits are part of the process to set up an individual annual carbon reduction target for a specific service or ALEO and to create an action plan to achieve it.
- Supporting the implementation of these action plans.
- Analysing the council's transport fleet and creating plans to make the fleet more carbon efficient. For example the viability of introducing electric vehicles.

- Identifying sites where waste is not correctly sorted and recommending and planning improvements.
- Promoting behavioural change to support carbon reduction targets among the administration's staff, pupils and other users of council and ALEOs' services with training and presentations.

The wardens are trained and supervised by the Carbon Management Team (CMT), which oversees that the council meets its carbon reduction target. The wardens receive assistance throughout their deployment, including in preparation for carrying out audits, reviewing reports, and helping with data analysis. Due to the high level of support, and because the wardens often see their recommendations carried forward, their self confidence increases.

Individuals with a history of long term unemployment need to feel valued and some people lack the social or technical skills needed in an office environment. The wardens come from a wide variety of backgrounds, ranging from military careers to people that have not been able to work for years due to chronic illness; and may require extra support. To deal with this, additional workplace assistance has been put in place to meet individual needs. For example, some people received training in IT or numeracy skills.

A dedicated management structure was also set up, including a human resource manager to oversee the programme and ensure people's individual needs are addressed. The manager's role involves recruiting the green wardens, training them, coordinating their support requests and deployment in an effective way, meeting regularly with the wardens, reviewing their work, and tracking the savings.



IMPACT

The scheme has been active for a year and so far 16 wardens have been taken on as part of four separate groups. Four of the 16 wardens have already secured full time employment and a further two are investigating starting up their own green businesses.

To date the green wardens have identified changes that could save the council £391,225. The implemented solutions decrease energy use by 5,751,281 kWh and CO2 emissions by 1,979 tonnes annually. The green wardens also improved recycling in leisure centres and museums – work which is being replicated throughout the council and ALEOs.

FUNDING

The scheme was designed to be cost neutral, with the savings identified and implemented by the wardens offsetting the cost of their employment. However, due to the savings achieved within the first year of the programme, it has now been given a permanent budget of £200,000. This means that at least 12 individuals will go through the programme each year.