

**Glasgow City Council****Net Zero and Climate progress Monitoring City Policy Committee****Report by Director of Regional Economic Growth****Contact: Dominic Dowling Ext: 70257****Step Up to Net Zero Update****Purpose of Report:**

To provide Committee with an update on the first phase of the Step Up to Net Zero programme.

Recommendations:

Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of the report;
- Note the content of the independent evaluation of Step Up to Net Zero Phase I;
- Note that an evaluation report for Phase II will be presented to Committee at the conclusion of the project.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:**

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1 Background

- 1.1 On the 24th Feb 2022, the City Administration Committee approved £628,676 of funding for Step Up to Net Zero (STNZ), a circular economy demonstrator, to be delivered in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.
- 1.2 The programme was designed to embed 40 individual placements across 40 Glasgow-based SMEs, to undertake an audit of business practices within each organisation and identify opportunities to reduce carbon emissions, adopt circular practices and reduce waste. Subsequently, an action plan to improve circularity, minimise waste and take steps to move towards net zero would be developed.

2 Activity

- 2.1 The programme ran between September 2022 and August 2023, with 40 individuals embedded in 39 organisations.
- 2.2 Participants were recruited on an all-age offer and comprised a mix of graduates, returners to the labour market, and those in employment but looking to upskill/reskill. Over 70% of successful candidates were female, and candidates' ages ranged from 21-24 up to 60-64.
- 2.3 Successful participants received a broad range of training inputs:
 - AIEMA-certified 2hr 'Introduction to Net Zero' training course,
 - A follow-on 2 day AIEMA-certified 'Pathways to Net Zero' course,
 - Training created specifically for SUTNZ participants focused on net zero, sustainable business strategy and circular economy,
 - Participants also received skills-based training to support personal development with a choice of courses including communication, time management, project management and budgeting.
- 2.4 Participating businesses were all Glasgow-based and were drawn from a range of sectors, including construction, hospitality and manufacturing. Over three quarters of participating businesses employed ten or fewer staff, with the highest staffing number for a participating business being 240.
- 2.5 Slightly over half of the businesses reported no prior knowledge of the subject matter prior to STNZ.

3 Evaluation and Next Steps

- 3.1 Upon conclusion of the programme, an independent evaluation was commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce, carried out by O'Herlihy and Co consultants.
- 3.2 Overall, conclusions were overwhelmingly positive, with focus groups

and stakeholder meetings providing qualitative data on a range of aspects, both from the perspective of the individual placement and the participating business.

- 3.3 In addition to providing positive feedback on the overall value of the programme, participants were also given the opportunity to score the effectiveness of specific programme features. STNZ was considered to be particularly effective in improving *research and* analytical skills, compiling information and developing creative thinking. Similarly, participant feedback was captured on knowledge gained, with high ratings returned for the modules *What is Net Zero?*, *What is Circular Economy?*, *The difference between Recycling and Circularity*, *What are Scope 1, 2 and 3 Emissions?* and *Ways of Cutting Greenhouse Gases*.
- 3.4 As of 31st July 2024, thirteen business employed their placement following the initial programme. In addition, two participants were engaged in a freelance capacity with a STNZ business, ten have found employment with a non-STNZ business, three are now self-employed and one is pursuing further study.
- 3.5 Businesses reported that the audit and action plans helped them to frame future actions. The outputs were clear, logical and practical in a way that earlier in-house activities were not; categorising activity as net zero, waste and circularity helped firms to digest specific challenges and opportunities in each area, where previously many were overwhelmed by the weight of the overall task; the businesses also reported benefit from the short, medium, and long-term actions outlined by the audits. This allowed them to prioritise activity, utilising their placement to address short term actions.
- 3.6 A range of recommendations were made, including the strong suggestion that STNZ be extended, or continued in a future phase. One significant suggestion for change, based on consistent feedback from business and participants, was that placement time be extended from four months to six months.
- 3.7 Approval was granted for phase II of STNZ by the City Administration Committee on the 14th September 2023. The programme has been updated to reflect the recommendation that placement length should be increased to six months.
- 3.8 29 businesses have been accepted to the programme, all of which are Glasgow-based SMEs and operate across a range of sectors.
- 3.9 An evaluation of Phase II will be undertaken and brought before committee.

4 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: None

Legal: None

Personnel: None

Procurement: None

Council Strategic Plan: Specify which Grand Challenge (s) and Mission (s) the proposal supports. Where appropriate the relevant Commitment can also be listed.

- A Thriving Economy, specifically priority 3
- A Sustainable and Low Carbon City, specifically priority 67

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify. Yes, recruitment of individuals adhered to the Council's Equality Outcomes and lead to an improvement economic outcome for people with protected characteristics. The final demographic of participants was 75% female.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? Positive impact. Potential increase in opportunity for people with protected characteristics.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage. The programme may lead to businesses supported in some of the more deprived areas of the city and may lead to individuals from similar areas securing work placements

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify: Yes. Directly contributes to the delivery of the Glasgow Green Deal.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal? A reduction in carbon and increased energy efficiency.

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

The adoption of circular practice will have a positive impact on the environment and the Council's ambitions around net-zero carbon.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N

None.

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

5 Recommendations

Notes

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