



# CIWM KEY OPPORTUNITIY AND PROPOSITION FOR GOVERNMENT

Response on Skills England  
and Future for Green Skills

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## INTRODUCTION

**Skills England is expected to bring together the relevant stakeholders in private and public spheres to meet the skills needs of the future, and meet aspirations set out in the 'Industrial Strategy and Green Prosperity Plan', including the net-zero transition.**

The proposed changes to building the appropriate skills through the 'Growth and Skills Levy' recognise the need for increased flexibility and autonomy of local communities to make decisions on the types and quantity of qualifications required<sup>1</sup>.

We acknowledge the Labour Government for recognising the limitations of the previous Apprenticeship Levy and signalling an improved system with greater flexibility and input from key stakeholders. This aligns with some of the recommendations put forward by the skills sector.

However, the closure of the Green Jobs Delivery Group, and the evidence-based insight and guidance it offered, is concerning if we are to successfully build toward net zero targets. With focus now entirely shifted toward Energy, critical and historically underfunded sectors such as waste, circular economy, and water may now fail to unlock significant potential gains in the movement toward a zero waste economy and hinder the UK's ability to meet stated targets.

We believe greater focus needs to be given to the coordinated delivery of a green skills pipeline, beyond Energy, to have a skills system that supports a functional and coordinated green sector and a prosperous economy.

We welcome the introduction of the Circular Economy Taskforce, and feel this could lead on the skills planning for circular economy sectors. We are keen to support the Taskforce in achieving this, through our well established community of independent experts, large and SME employers, professional bodies, education institutions and advocacy groups.

## > PROPOSITION

CIWM is ideally placed as an independent, charitable and Chartered organisation to support Defra and Skills England to understand and plan for the skills and people needs of the waste, resource management and circular economy sectors.

In 2021 we established the CIWM Skills for the Future Working Group; a group of over 70 dedicated expert professionals from across the sector, who have supported the previous government and sector to deliver:

- 01 EVIDENCE-BASED INSIGHT
- 02 SECTOR SKILLS MATRIX
- 03 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTENT
- 04 POLICY INFLUENCING SUPPORT AND INSIGHT

We are keen to offer the services of this group, along with the insights of the CIWM Group's 18,000 individual members and over 300 corporate members, as you shape the policies that will ultimately deliver on the UK's climate ambitions.

## ➤ INITIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR SWIFT AND IMPACTFUL CHANGE

We have identified three key areas offering swift and impactful change, should they be implemented by the new government.

### 01 Diversifying the Apprenticeship Levy to Create a Green Skills Fund

A Green Skills Fund would pump prime the transition. This fund could be used flexibly for approved qualifications and training, careers advice, and regional hubs of excellence to ensure the right technical skills and innovation to deliver complex change.

We suggest the 'Growth and Skills Levy' reform acknowledges the need for a ring-fenced green skills fund.

Additionally, the reform should adopt the recommendations of the Skills Commission's *Skills 2030* report, with a particular focus on:

- Using the full Levy
- Diversifying its use across a broader range of training and qualifications, including both non-apprenticeship and apprenticeship qualifications
- Creating a more streamlined system
- Greater coordination between government, local authorities, professional bodies, education institutions and industry
- A portion of funding available is dedicated to promoting entry-level talent at levels 2 and 3
- Dedicated focus on identifying future skills needs of the country that meets the needs of employers and provides wider social benefits
- Review of the requirements of apprenticeship completion including time off the job, numeracy and literacy requirements and sheer learning hours.

CIWM is willing and equipped to collaborate with Skills England to advise on the types of approved qualifications that are needed for the resources and waste sector. For example, the entry-level skills required for the resources and waste management sector would be better suited to stand-alone Level 2 qualification without the rules around the time off the job exacerbating costs.

We believe unlocking funding for green skills is the first step in building the much needed human capacity to deliver a zero waste economy.

## 02 Developing the UK Green Skills Roadmap

UK industry requires a green skills roadmap detailing the skills necessary to address the current job gap in the short and medium term. This will provide certainty for professional bodies, training and education institutions, and businesses to start investing in the development of courses, workforce and infrastructure to meet future demands.

The signal that the Green Jobs Delivery Group will not remain, may remove the critical link between cross-sector collaboration. This may limit the effectiveness of creating a coordinated green skills roadmap and successful policy outcomes for green sectors. Greater recognition needs to be given to the resources and waste sector. The transition requires core circular jobs, enabling direct and indirect circular jobs all necessary for a successful post-transition economy. These resource management-based roles support renewable energy, technology, machinery and infrastructure. Over 200,000 new jobs will be needed across the resources and waste sector by 2040 to support the needs of green and transitioning industries<sup>2</sup>. Without a dedicated collaborative body for all green sectors, such as the Green Jobs Delivery Group, extensive cross-government coordination will be required to ensure the appropriate coordination.

CIWM requests Defra form an equivalent to the Office for Clean Energy Jobs, to highlight the workforce demands for these other green sectors and coordinate these demands with the Office for Clean Energy within the Skills England framework. This will assist in the coordinated delivery of a workforce equipped for a successful green transition.

CIWM is eager and able to support DEFRA in establishing this group. Our membership can provide a productive network with the resources and waste sector, as well as an extensive amount of research into skills and technical waste developments.

### 03 Investment in Career Attractiveness

Government has an opportunity to play a significant role in stimulating the development of skills and the complementary infrastructure, policy and behavioural change required. Specific investment in training and retraining programmes for green skills must be incorporated into policy, plus career support and promotion in the education system.

Increasing sector attractiveness is key to stimulating an attitude shift in the current and potential workforce. Currently, the information available to students and the available workforce fails to illustrate how vital the resources and waste sector is to the transition compared to other industries. The green credentials of the resources and waste sector, therefore, need to be central to the government's transition narrative and how these are critical in supporting the other central sectors. The circular economy concept is only referenced in select locations in the UK and needs to be used consistently to appropriately frame what is required.

Defra should work with Skills England, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education on curriculum and careers advice, with the aim of building a pathway to increase sector attractiveness and encourage more people to the green sector, and highlight the vital role that resources and waste management play. CIWM is eager to collaborate with government and industry to deliver this.



## > SUMMARY

CIWM has worked collaboratively to develop the above recommendations, and in offering our expertise and support to the execution of them.

We believe our support can be utilised by the Circular Economy Taskforce, and any sub-groups created to deliver evidence-based insight and information that can be used to positively influence impactful policymaking.

We are pleased to confirm that this briefing has the support of:

