

Minutes of the Meeting of GreenSpace South West Training & Skills Working Group
Tuesday 27th November 2007 at 2pm
Council House, Civic Centre, Plymouth

		Actions
1.	Present	
	Richard Taylor – Torbay Council Nick Jones – Plymouth CC Adrian Cook – Mid Devon BC Sarah Moore – GreenSpace Mark Pollard – East Devon DC Steve Rippin – East Devon DC Brian Webber – Plymouth CC David Winn - Lantra	
2.	Apologies	
3.	Meeting	
	<p>1. Introductions</p> <p>1.1 NJ welcomed the meeting and introductions were made.</p> <p>1.2 NJ explained this initial meeting was to scope; identify needs and opportunities to take forward work around the skills and training agenda in the SW region.</p> <p>2. Review of existing Skills Work</p> <p>a) CAFE Space</p> <p>2.1 SM informed the meeting that CAFE Space are currently developing a National Skills Strategy for Urban Green Space.</p> <p>2.2 This work follows the publication of the ‘Egan Review – Skills for Sustainable Communities (2004)’ which recommended a new national skills centre be set up. The CAFE Space strategy will be linked to the new centre.</p>	

2.3	<p>There will be opportunities for consultation and feedback as part of the development of the strategy, which the SW Training & Skills Working Group (TSWG) may respond to. SM to update the group.</p>	SM
<p>b) GreenSpace/Institute of Parks & Green Space (IPGS)</p>		
2.4	<p>SM explained that GreenSpace launched IPGS in January 2007 and has been working on developing a training framework for the sector based on the criteria of the new TAES (Towards An Excellent Service) business excellence model for parks and open space.</p>	
2.5	<p>A discussion ensued about how TAES replaces best value and CPA, and is a self-assessment model with options for external validation. More information can be found at: http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=5638651</p>	
2.6	<p>SM informed the group that CAFE Space have commissioned GreenSpace/IPGS to run overview training on the new TAES framework. Training dates as follows:</p> <p>13 Dec 07 – London, CAFE Space office 16 Jan 08 - Essex, Cressing Temple 17 Jan 08 - Guildford, Burchatts Barn 23 Jan 08 – Taunton, Taunton Cricket Club 5 March 08 – Nottingham, Wollaton Hall 12 March 08 - Liverpool, National Wildflower Centre 13 March 08 - Leamington Spa, Jephson Gardens 19 March 08 - Sunderland, Winter Gardens 20 March 08 - York, York CVS</p> <p>Please visit the GreenSpace website or contact Jude Lockett judel@green-space.org.uk if you would like to book a place.</p>	ALL
2.7	<p>SM described the new GreenSkill online CPD database that IPGS are developing with Lantra. The online system enables individuals to map their skills and competencies, which are then endorsed by their manager, enabling individuals to identify gaps in knowledge and make provisions for training with a view to forwarding their careers.</p>	
2.8	<p>DW explained further that GreenSkill is based on the National Occupation Standards, and the system is used by individuals and managers, and then can be externally assessed by a qualified assessor highlighting various options for external verification.</p>	
2.9	<p>DW highlighted some benefits of GreenSkill, particularly through internal recognition of individual's skills and assessment certificate. GreenSkill will also provide proof of training for volunteers and seasonal workers.</p>	

2.10	A discussion ensued about the benefits and problems associated with self-assessment and options for external validation were welcomed. AC queried GreenSkill links to job evaluation. The group discussed assessment of the old apprenticeship schemes and NVQs.	
2.11	SM requested that the group considers acting as a test group for GreenSkill, suggesting that a colleague could present the system at their next meeting and outline proposals for testing. SM to liaise with Bryan Spencer (GreenSpace) to present GreenSkill at the next meeting.	SM
2.12	The group discussed the loss of in-house specialist trainers and the lack of qualified trainers. Also Highlighting that ROSPA inspectors are still called in to undertake playground inspections. NJ suggested their may be opportunities for this group to share resources and organise joint training. c) Lantra	
2.13	DW introduced his role within Lantra and is responsible for Horticulture and Floristry.	
2.14	DW described changes within the education system by central government, highlighting that the DFES deals with under 16 education and the LSC (Learning & Skills Councils) further/higher education.	
2.15	DW described the changes to the NVQ system that enables 'bite sized learning' where individuals can select relevant modules to allow a tailor-made qualification. It's anticipated this change will benefit both new and long standing staff that may not be able to commit to a full qualification and will benefit from additional achievements. Transferable skills will be developed via the bite sized learning programme and it will link to GreenSkill to help plan career developments. This will also assist Streetscene Managers as who require a wide range of skills, and the new structure will include HSE, marketing, customer care, amenity horticulture etc. The qualifications points system is: 12 points – Award 20 points – Certificate 30 points – Diploma	
2.16	SR queried how the programme will be tested, and DW explained that a test and trial is being undertaken in the NW and SE regions. RT enquired about flexibility of the units to change, and DW stated that once agreed they will be reviewed periodically.	
2.17	The group briefly discussed how the sector seems to be joining up more as collaborative working continues between organisations.	

	DW mentioned that once the National Occupation Standards issues are resolved, Lantra will recommend one body oversees skills.	
2.18	The group discussed the governments' latest initiative to put funds towards training individuals aged over 25, which may be useful for the parks and green space sector which receives career changers. ST mentioned East Devon were criticised in the CPA report for an ageing workforce.	
2.19	The group discussed employers, highlighting that local authorities and contractors are the largest employers within the sector.	
2.20	The discussion moved to apprenticeships, identifying that each LA around the table had on average one apprentice. DW informed the meeting that Lantra had 12 applicants for the apprenticeship in production horticulture and around 6-700 applicants for amenity horticulture across the UK but many of these focus on golf courses. Lantra will be undertaking a review of apprenticeships, including providers and delivery mechanisms. DW to email the regional forums via SM to identify apprenticeships and training needs.	DW/SM
2.21	DW mentioned the forthcoming 'Train to Gain' event in the region, stating that Lyndsay Bird would share details with the group.	LB/SM
2.22	DW informed the group about the new 14-19 Diploma for Environmental and land based studies. The Diploma is equivalent to four A-Levels at its highest level. UKAS have accepted the diploma and the pilot phase will take place between 2009-2013.	
2.23	A discussion ensued around colleges, highlighting that entry onto Horticulture courses is reserved for underperforming students and the focus is generally on special needs children which deters bright academics. Also discussed funding for colleges, highlighting that it is based on the number of successful students. DW felt that bite sized learning will address this imbalance and in the future horticulture will develop and link to the public realm more.	
	d) GreenSpace North West	
2.24	SM outlined the work undertaken by the TSWG in the North West region, in particular the dedicated web page and research report. http://www.gsnw.org.uk/TrainingWG.htm	
	3. Scoping discussion on Skills & Training issues in the South West	
3.1	Agreed discussion and issues identified during earlier discussions.	

3.2	The group discussed key focus areas for the group, citing GreenSkill testing, responding to policy consultations, research and pooling resources.	
3.3	The group agreed the North West research should be replicated in the SW region, because it will provide a useful baseline as well as evidence to benefit the wider sector.	
3.4	<p>The group reviewed the questionnaire and agreed additions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of staff • Number of Part-time and full-time posts • Identify service providers • Identify training budgets (Corporate and Departmental) • Cost per staff • Separate seminars & workshops from conferences • Number of Local authorities with their own in-house assessors • Identify options to pool assessors • How training needs are identified • Number of local authorities offering work experience (and those with links to international students) • Options for sharing training and other resources • What priority skills are needed when you take on new staff 	
3.5	All to comment on the questionnaire to SM by Tuesday 11th December 2007.	ALL
3.6	SM to circulate draft questionnaire for comments following December deadline.	SM
3.7	Research methodology, draft questionnaire and research timetable to be agreed at the next meeting.	ALL/BW
4. Organising the Working Group		
4.1	The group briefly discussed organisation of the group. SM highlighted the group will need to be self-organising with support from the Regional Forum and GreenSpace/Lantra. This is because the new SW Development Manager is on a short contract due to fundraising issues.	
4.2	<p>The group briefly discussed roles:</p> <p>NJ – Chair BW – Collate research MP – Host the next meeting</p>	
4.3	The group will need to consider representation, roles, venues and secretariat as it develops.	

	5. Developing the Terms of Reference	
5.1	The group briefly reviewed the Terms of Reference developed for the NW group, and SM suggested this could be replicated for the South West with the inclusion of an additional aim to encourage the group to pool resources. SM to circulate draft for comment.	SM
5.2	NJ to update the SW Forum at the next meeting on 11th December 2007.	NJ
	Date of the Next Meeting	
	2pm – 4pm Tuesday 29 th January 2008 in Sidmouth. Hosted by East Devon DC, MP to liaise with SM on arrangements for the meeting.	MP/SM