



Tender Brief:

Feasibility Study for a Sustainable, Inclusive, Green, and Resilient Skills Hub

1. Purpose of study

The purpose of this study, part funded by South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, is to complete a rapid review of how Green & Resilient Skills should be defined to meet the needs of our region, explore the existing provision for these skills, understand where there are our gaps and opportunities and then recommend a sustainable business model for The Green Estate CIC to create a Hub that supports Green & Resilient Skill acquisition.

2. Background

The Green Estate CIC mission is to grow green and resilient urban places for people and nature to thrive. It is an award-winning organisation with 70 staff and 40 plus volunteers located on a 14-hectare site of beautiful parklands and heritage buildings in an urban setting in the heart of Sheffield. It was set up in the 90's as a regeneration project and has since transformed the landscape in Green Flag award winning parklands, become a renowned expert in resilience landscaping and created the unique and highly successful 'Pictorial Meadows' products and services. Formally constituted in 2003 the organisation has recently been awarded the King's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development, named as British Chambers Business of the Year and are in the top 100 Social Enterprises in the UK.

The Green Estate CIC is now ready to scale up its impact, influence and income and has a 2030 goal to become a national demonstrator for urban resilience. It has a new mission and strategy (see appendix 1) and has received funding from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to carry out a feasibility study to test ideas for the development of an Urban Resilience Centre. This includes a rapid review on the definition of place-based urban resilience, a community co-design process to develop a place-based model of urban resilience, a feasibility study of a sustainable and scaled up visitor offer, an innovative green finance feasibility study and this inclusive green and resilient skills hub feasibility study. When all the component parts are complete there will be a masterplan drawn up bringing it altogether.



During the last 20 years we have delivered a myriad of learning and education activities, programmes and events. This has included volunteering, apprenticeships, internships and placements. We have hosted masterclasses for post graduate students, CPD's for horticultural industry and education sessions for primary and secondary schools. This has tended to be ad hoc and reactive to demand.

In delivering this we have identified gaps in needs and demand and a lack of systematic approach around green and resilient skills support, for example.:

- The government definition of green skills is limited
- There is a missing link between young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds and people labelled as 'economically inactive' and the opportunities available
- Courses like Landscape Architecture are struggling to recruit students despite the relative success of their graduates getting jobs.
- There seems to be a lack of forward planning for the stresses and shocks we are already experiencing as a result of the climate, ecological and social crisis in terms of the skills that will be needed, e.g. managing water flow, food growing, community connecting, emergency response etc.
- There is no RHS learning centre in Sheffield despite it being 'the greenest city in Europe' and being host to some of the country's most well-known horticulturalists and pioneering examples of urban greening.

3. Objectives

The feasibility study aims to explore the viability of unlocking the potential of our track record, assets and partnerships to build an inclusive green and resilient skills pathway hub which tackles deep rooted inequalities and unemployment in S2 and beyond and prepares communities and our green economy for the future.

The feasibility study must include:

Phase One - Define

- Undertake a rapid review of current definitions of green and resilient skills and produce an agreed definition that supports our mission to grow green and resilient urban places for people and nature to thrive. This will both align with our



work to define place-based urban resilience and be recognisable as an investable proposition by funders.

Phase Two - Explore

- Assess the extent to which this new definition of green and resilient skills is currently met by existing skills providers in South Yorkshire
- Understand the demands of both the future workforce and of communities and the skills they need to respond to future shocks.
- Review what access needs the target audience for these skills will have. For example, will it most likely benefit those who are already working and therefore require us to consider a 'night school' rather than a day time provision.
- Investigate the existing The Green Estate assets, such as structures and green space for skill development, and how to best unlock its potential.

Phase Three – Recommended Business & Operating Model

Develop/explore a sustainable operating model including investment needed to establish and operate a Green & Resilient skills hub including:

- Current and possible future funding and revenue sources and identify what processes, partnerships etc would need to happen to access the funding. This should include B2C sales, 'pay it forward' models, Ofsted registration, etc.
- Recommended operating model e.g. inhouse, partnership/joint venture or external provider
- Produce options for a sustainable business model and practical route map for the development of a green and inclusive skills hub.

Principles and considerations

- Work should prioritise outcomes and impact for the communities served by the hub rather than input activities such as attendance numbers or completed courses.
- The work should seek to overcome inequalities and consider how we lift real barriers to accessing skills development support such as poverty, language, culture, self-esteem, and digital exclusion.
- This should be innovative and forward looking thinking beyond the status quo and current approaches.



- Consider both formal and accredited training and informal non-accredited learning activities, e.g. volunteering through to PhD.
- Needs to unlock the potential of our assets including land, facilities and partners
- Enterprise support potential should be considered as part of the wider offer, e.g. hosting a provider onsite and setting up and supporting new enterprises.
- We are nationally renowned for our landscaping innovation and skills so would expect this to be a key element of the hub, e.g. becoming an RHS learning centre, relationship with the local Universities.

4. Scope of Work

The consultant/firm will be expected to:

- Produce a clear definition for what is included in 'inclusive green and resilient skills', which is aligned to The Green Estate CIC's vision and recognisable to external stakeholders.
- Review relevant policies, strategies, and global/regional best practices.
- Map local and regional stakeholders, gaps, opportunities and partners within inclusive green and resilient related sectors.
- Review the different possible operational models for the learning hub and how partners can be involved. In particular, whether it adds more value for The Green Estate to become a training provider or a facilitator for other providers.
- Assess The Green Estate CIC assets (including site, location, networks, skills) for use as a learning hub and where modification would be required i.e. sufficient facilities for different types of use.
- Investigate which courses, whether accredited or not, will have the greatest impact, in terms of both uptake from learners and subsequent quality of life improvement for them.
- Conduct financial analysis and risk assessment for sustainable operation, including whether the Hub is a training provision itself or a host for other providers.
- Collate the needs and expectations of possible funders. Would The Green Estate CIC need to become Ofsted registered to access this funding? Are there other campaigns across the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority that could mutually benefit through collaboration.
- Deliver a feasibility report with clear recommendations about the different options and their viability.



5. Deliverables

- Inception Report: Detailing methodology, proposed consultations, and timeline.
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan & Report: Summary of engagements and findings.
- Draft Feasibility Study: Including initial analysis and recommendations.
- Final Feasibility Report: Incorporating feedback and containing:
 - Needs analysis
 - Business model proposals
 - Environmental, social, and economic impact assessments
 - Risk and mitigation strategies
 - Recommendations and next steps
- Presentation: Summary to stakeholders/Board of Directors.

6. Timeline

- Issue of Brief: August 2025
- Submission of Proposals: 30th September 2025
- Project Start: 20th October 2025
- Draft Report: 23rd January 2026
- Final Report: 6th February 2026 with presentation of report to take place in February 2026

7. Budget

- In the region of £14,000 + VAT. Payment schedule to be negotiated.

8. Submission Requirements

Proposals should include:

- Inception report including approach and methodology
- Work plan and detailed timeline
- Relevant organizational and team experience/CVs, including a breakdown of how these team members time will be committed to the project.
- Budget breakdown
- At least two prior project references and publicly available examples of outputs.
- Declaration of interests, such as links to existing training providers.



9. Evaluation Criteria

Selection will be based on:

- Understanding of climate, ecological and social crisis context and resilience, adaptation and sustainable development
- Expertise and understanding of the skills training and learning market
- Methodology and approach
- Track record, experience and qualifications of the team
- Value for money
- Commitment to inclusivity and sustainability
- How any interests declared could affect the final report.

An initial desk based review of the submissions will be completed and this may result in a follow up interview process before a final decision is made. Interviews will take place week commencing 29th September 2025

10. Contact Details

Submit queries or proposals to Martin Collins, Director of People and Operations.

Email: martin.collins@greenestate.org

For more information about The Green Estate CIC go to www.greenestate.org.uk



Appendix 1: Mission and Strategy

2030 Strategy

Mission

Together
One team and working in partnership

Grow
Increase, develop, nurture

Green
Nature-based solutions, sustainability, regenerative/circular, e.g. Peat-Free Compost, Grey to Green

Together we grow green and resilient urban places for people and nature to thrive

Urban Places
Cities, towns, densely populated areas

People and Nature to thrive
Recognising that we are an entangled with the rest of the natural ecosystem. Focusing on action which enables the whole ecosystem to grow successfully together.

Resilient
Prepared and able to cope with expected and unexpected challenges, e.g. strong community infrastructure and facilities, sustainable drainage systems, renewable energy, skills, etc.

We care for our local roots

We are innovative and impactful

We act with integrity

We are collaborative for the common global good

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2030 Strategy

Goal and Objectives

Thriving Business
Ensuring a healthy working environment & robust governance and management system



Innovative Nature-Based Solutions
Designing innovative & impactful nature-based solutions demonstrated in S2 & delivered through Pictorial Meadows



National Demonstrator
Becoming a nationally renowned urban resilience demonstrator



Our 2030 goal is to become a national urban resilience demonstrator
We will achieve this through demonstration radiating from the grassroots outwards

Effective Team
Developing a high performing effective team



Skilled & Healthy Communities
Co-designing & delivering regenerative, skilled & healthy communities



Inclusive & Impactful Visitor Experiences
Curating inclusive, impactful, and aspirational visitor experiences



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This project is being delivered by The Green Estate CIC and is part-funded by South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.