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Executive summary

In the Spring of 2013, the CSGN Support Unit commissioned an audit to gain a clearer understanding of the extent and volume of employment and training activity based outdoors which contributed towards the development of the CSGN during the year 2012.

Outputs from this research will be useful to the CSGN Support Unit and partners as baseline information for the position in 2012 and to promote current good practice. It is also anticipated that the study will be useful in informing policy and funding decisions which can stimulate further training and work experience activity which helps put people into employment or further education and improves the environment of the Central Belt of Scotland.

Youth unemployment is a key concern for the CSGN, it represents a costly and underused resource. The Prince's Trust estimated that in 2010, youth unemployment was costing the UK economy more than £155 million per week in benefits payments and lost productivity, the costs of youth crime were put at another £23 million per week.

Our study looked specifically at schemes and employability programmes which teach people skills in an outdoor setting, often focussing on the improvement of local environmental goods and services. Contacts were asked to provide details of initiatives run between January and December 2012. The study gathered information from 24 organisations relating to 31 initiatives.

Although complete data was not accessible for every one of these initiatives, the figures received indicate that 660 young people took part in relevant courses over the year. The schemes varied in length and set-up costs but on average they lasted for 24 weeks and cost is £6,225 per trainee.

The trainees benefited from participating in the scheme in variety of ways including: improving practical skills; gaining qualifications; obtaining work experience and also less tangible 'soft-skills' which are crucial in obtaining and keeping a job. As a result they are more employable. Information on the destination of almost 300 of these young people shows nearly a half went directly into employment, just over a quarter returned to unemployment, a fifth went into volunteering and the remainder went on to further education or other training.

The initiatives also delivered a range of environmental improvements which benefitted both the local communities and wildlife. In terms of what types of activities the trainees were engaged in, 26 of the 31 schemes included woodland management, 26 habitat enhancement, 26 footpath improvement, 24 litter removal, 19 landscaping works, 14 fencing and boundary, 13 horticulture and 10 built infrastructure and signage.

Using the research as a guide for future activity it is estimated that an investment of £10 million has the potential to enable some 1,600 people (or 2.5% of CSGN's unemployed 16-24 year olds) to be trained, from which we might anticipate around 740 would move into employment. Furthermore, during their training these young people could help to develop the green infrastructure within the CSGN area by, for example, upgrading and maintaining around 1,900km of footpath, planting 1,200ha of woodland and spot weeding 1,000ha.

The report concludes that the environmental sector can play a positive role in enhancing the employment prospects for CSGN's young people. Although labour market intervention schemes could be considered costly in the short-term, in the long-term the advantages to the individual and the wider society are cumulative. These schemes ultimately will produce a high return on this investment in terms of individual wellbeing, productivity and citizenship and contribute towards the physical development of the CSGN.

1. Why is the CSGN interested in training?

The CSGN is one of the 14 national developments in the National Planning Framework 2. It is the biggest greenspace project in Europe and will help to make Central Scotland a more attractive and distinctive place to live, to visit and to do business. The CSGN has wide political and partner support and an all encompassing remit, far beyond just a 'green' initiative, with economic development central on the agenda.

The current economic downturn has had a profound effect across all Scottish industries. However, in terms of employment, the impact has not been equally dispersed across all age groups. In particular, young people (aged 16-24) have suffered the most with a huge reduction in employment opportunities. Across the CSGN area there are 428,000 young people. Around 65,000 of these are unemployed (creating an unemployment rate of 23%) and 143,000 are inactive¹. (Annual Population Survey, ONS Apr 2012-Mar 2013).

Although there are differing circumstances, the high current youth unemployment rate is similar to that recorded during previous recessions. However, it can be argued that young people today face even greater challenges in gaining employment because in previous years, the recovering post-recession labour market had a greater capacity to take on young, low-skilled workers as the manufacturing sector was larger. It is feared that when the economy recovers, we will be left with a pool of low-skilled, young people lacking qualifications and work experience. It is anticipated that these people will be further marginalised within the labour market as new employment opportunities gravitate towards more recent school leavers. In short, we are in danger of creating a 'lost cohort' in our society who will find it increasingly difficult to gain employment.

The social and economic consequences of this scenario are profoundly costly not only in the present sense but also as these individuals get older and carry the costs of their early years experiences of disengagement with the labour market into later life. Research on the subject reveals that youth unemployment costs the UK Taxpayer £22 million per week in terms of Job Seekers Allowance, with additional related costs of up to £23 million per week in youth crime and up to £133 million in lost productivity.²

The realisation of a strong and vibrant green network can be part of the solution to this problem. The prosperity of Central Scotland is fundamentally linked to the skills of its workforce and that the environmental sector can play a positive role in enhancing the employment prospects for everyone – especially young people. This will help to deliver not only career orientated skills but also those transferable 'soft' skills which a wide variety of employers require.

Under the 'A Place for Growth' theme, the CSGN aims to increase employment and training in land based 'green' and 'low carbon' industries with the objective of not only providing meaningful work experience and support for young people but also to improve local greenspace and the wider environment for everyone to enjoy.

Anecdotally, the CSGN Support Unit is aware of many relevant green training and work experience schemes operating across the CSGN area. These are led by organisations such

¹ These are people without a job who have not actively sought work in the last four weeks and/or are not available to start work in the next two weeks. Reasons cited include caring for family/home, long-term sick disabled, students and retired.

² Prince's Trust –The Cost of Exclusion 2010 http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/COE_full_report.pdf

as Forestry Commission Scotland, Local Authorities, third sector organisations like the Wise Group, and more small-scale, initiative-based providers such as the Falkirk Community Trust. However, until now we did not have a clear overview as to the extent and scope of this highly fragmented activity.

2. The research process

The principal aim of this study was to gain a clearer understanding as to the extent and scope of work experience and training provision within the environmental sector within the CSGN area which occurred in 2012. We targeted schemes and employability programmes which taught people skills in an outdoor setting, often focussing on the improvement of local environmental goods and services.

These work programmes are usually targeted towards unemployed people; sometimes they are long term unemployed often with limited qualifications, skills or work experience. Typically the types of schemes we are interested in take place over a series of 2-6 months rather than years. We decided not to capture outputs from vocational courses and tertiary education sector in general (although FE and HE teaching organisations may have supplied components of the courses and training offered).

It is anticipated that outputs from this research will be useful to the CSGN Support Unit and partners as baseline information for the position in 2012 and to promote current good practice. It is hoped that the study will be useful in informing policy and funding decisions which can stimulate further training and work experience activity which helps put people into employment or further education and improves the environment of the Central Belt of Scotland.

Specifically what we wanted to know was:

- Who delivers relevant environment-based employability programmes, including any apprenticeship schemes?
- How many people are participating in this training and what do they get out of it?
- What activities are being undertaken and what environmental outputs are being achieved?
- What examples of good practice are evident which are capable of being replicated elsewhere?

Following a competitive tendering process, 'Why Research' was appointed to undertake the study in March 2013. Supplied with over 90 potentially relevant contacts by the Support Unit, it was tasked with the job of following up these leads to gather information on the subject matter. After some preliminary emails sent in April 2013, the bulk of the research took place via phone and email exchanges during May and early June 2013.

All initial contacts were made by telephone in order to speak directly to each potential respondent and ensure they were the correct individual within their organisation to provide the requested information. In many instances, a number of telephone contacts were made before reaching the potential respondent.

Where it was not possible to speak directly to a potential contact, either because the contact database did not have this level of information or because it was not possible to reach the

potential respondent by telephone, an email was sent out instead. Emails were generally sent after four or five attempts to contact potential respondents by telephone; and within two weeks of the initial contact. Delivery of these emails was recorded by the researchers, who left a period of a few days before attempting to recontact these potential respondents.

It had originally been assumed that contact sheets for each scheme provider would be completed during a telephone discussion. However, it became apparent that many providers were having to collate the information they provided from a number of different sources. So, providers were emailed a copy of the contact sheet, detailing the information required and asked to complete this and return it to the researchers. In some instances, follow up telephone calls were made to clarify any queries or request further information.

In addition to the name of the training provider and specific contact details, information gathered included:

- Scheme name
- Local authority area
- Specific location(s) of training scheme within CSGN area
- Lead organisation with responsibility for managing and running the training scheme
- Partner organisations involved in delivery of the training scheme
- List of main activities undertaken
- Environmental improvements introduced
- Key client group / eligibility for training scheme (including age, gender, whether long term unemployed, whether any disability, any other criteria)
- Number of trainees per scheme (enrolled between January and December 2012)
- Duration of each scheme (in weeks)
- Frequency of scheme
- Outputs (number into work, number returned to unemployment, education, volunteering, further course, other destination)
- Outcomes / what makes trainees more job ready? (qualifications, skills gained (hard and soft including health improvements, increased confidence etc)
- Cost per scheme to set up
- Cost per scheme to run
- Cost per trainee placement
- Indicative figure as to overall cost of scheme
- Funding body (ies) contributing to the scheme
- Details of any awards / recognition
- Any additional information

The CSGN Support Unit explored its records and worked with partners to produce a list of 94 potential providers of environmentally-based training and work experience activities within the CSGN area. The consultants took this forward and were able to obtain the majority of the required information from 24 training providers (operating 31 individual projects).

Unfortunately, despite the concerted best efforts and additional research time allocated to the data gathering exercise, the consultants believe they have not accessed data on all the schemes and initiatives which operated in 2012. They estimate that they gathered information on around 70% of relevant training undertaken during the year. In particular they noted that the larger organisations (including some local authorities) have typically not returned much data. Possibly, the most important of these is Scotland's Rural Colleges which is likely to be offering quite a wide range of courses, although it is difficult to say which

of these will be of direct relevance to CSGN. Other large organisations who did not provide information were Scottish Water, LANTRA and Skills Development Scotland. However, it is recognised that LANTRA and Skills Development Scotland may well not be direct providers of training but fund other organisations to provide the training – in this case the consultants may have received this from the local providers themselves.

In addition, many of contacts have struggled and / or been unable to provide the consultants with all the information requested, suggesting that record keeping is limited or not readily accessible in some organisations. A few respondents commented that they have had difficulties pulling this information together for the consultants because they did not keep a record of all / some of the information requested. In one Local Authority, data from all occupational areas were collected in one office. The contact explained that there would be an enormous amount of work involved in breaking down all the requested figures for specifically environmentally based training as “Our programmes for unemployed people offered around 700 [different courses] across all the programmes”.

In another case, collecting data from a smaller organisation, there was some reluctance to give direct contact details for the person who may have access to the relevant information as this person worked for a private provider. A representative from another organisation commented:

The information you are gathering is more detailed than we will have - the training we have run has been largely ad-hoc short courses, often drop-in rather than pre-booked - and we don't have ready collated outcomes for overall training impacts as most of our funding has been short term funding for specific projects.

The consultants also found that, in some organisations, there was no knowledge of where relevant data may be held; in one case, a local authority, the contact passed on details to every department but the relevant person or department was never identified.

Also detailed information on the actual physical environmental improvements was limited as most of the courses concentrated the focus of monitoring activity on the trainees themselves.

Having acknowledged that the survey is likely to undercount the true level of training within the CSGN area, the consultants were able to provide data in the desired format and an analysis of this information is presented below.

3. The results

3.1 Volume of training activity

- In 2012, there were a total of 660 trainees, from 57 separate courses - an average of 12 trainees per course.
- The courses were delivered through 31 schemes which were administered by 24 separate organisations.
- The majority of courses were run twice over the year and the average duration was about 24 weeks; with the shortest being 3 and the longest being 78 weeks.

3.2 Client characteristics

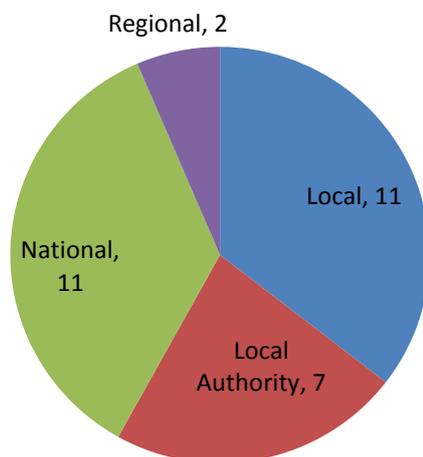
- The majority of courses tended to target young people of either gender with 16-24 year olds the most common age range.
- Most courses targeted the long-term unemployed (ie more than 12 months), or offered pre-work programmes for School leavers.
- Other characteristics in the target client groups included: *At risk of being homeless/ leaving care*, progressing through *criminal justice system*, *NEET* (not in employment, education or training), *drug & alcohol* issues, resident of specific 'deprived' area, *asylum seeker* and or member of a *BME community*.
- However, other than age, the most frequently mentioned characteristic mentioned was *learning difficulties* and / or *mental health problems*.

3.3 Types of delivery organisations

Most organisations (18 out of 31) delivered schemes based within a specific Council area or on a more localised basis. Five Local Authorities ran one or more programmes: Stirling, Falkirk, Fife, Glasgow, and West Lothian.

Several local level schemes were delivered by organisations such as *Urban Roots* and *The Hidden Gardens*. In some respects, this marks a diversification or progression of the specific delivery organisation into tackling labour market issues alongside other core activities (eg community gardening). Similarly other local level schemes have been delivered by organisations based around housing estates such as Castlemilk or Wester Hailles, which are seeking a holistic response to localised deprivation issues.

3.4 Geographic area of operations for training organisations



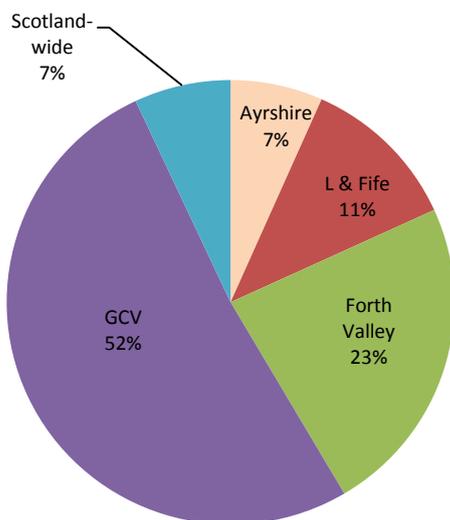
Relatively few organisations undertook courses on a regional basis (crossing one or two local authority boundaries). However, several considered their remit national (including Scottish Natural Heritage, The Conservation Volunteers, Barnados etc) though the courses themselves recruited mainly on a regional basis. A good example of this is Scottish Waterways Trust, which ran a project based within the Falkirk/North Lanarkshire area.

Regarding partners, a number of delivery organisations mentioned the importance of the Funding partners in the schemes. In particular, Forestry Commission Scotland was noted in several initiatives under its' *Youth Skills Programme* and related *Employability Programmes*.

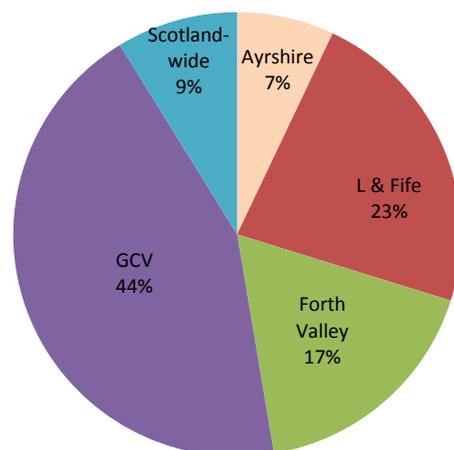
3.5 Location of training activity

- The pie charts below show that on a regional basis, based on the figures provided, the majority of training (52% of trainees and 44% courses) occurs in the Glasgow Clyde Valley (GCV) area. This is not unexpected as this is the largest and most densely populated CSGN region. The figures also reflect wider labour market trends which demonstrate that GCV as a whole (and Glasgow in particular) suffers from higher incidence of unemployment than other parts of Scotland.
- The second greatest volume of training activity took place in the Forth Valley Area (Falkirk, Clackmannanshire, Stirling).
- Lothians and Fife (including Edinburgh) had the third highest proportion of trainees but second highest proportion of courses, so per head the courses had fewer individuals on them.
- Ayrshire had the lowest proportion of the four CSGN regions (with 7% of both total trainees and courses).
- Scotland-wide activity (ie not confined to one or two Local Authorities) accounted for just 7% of trainees and 9% of courses.

Proportion of trainees per region



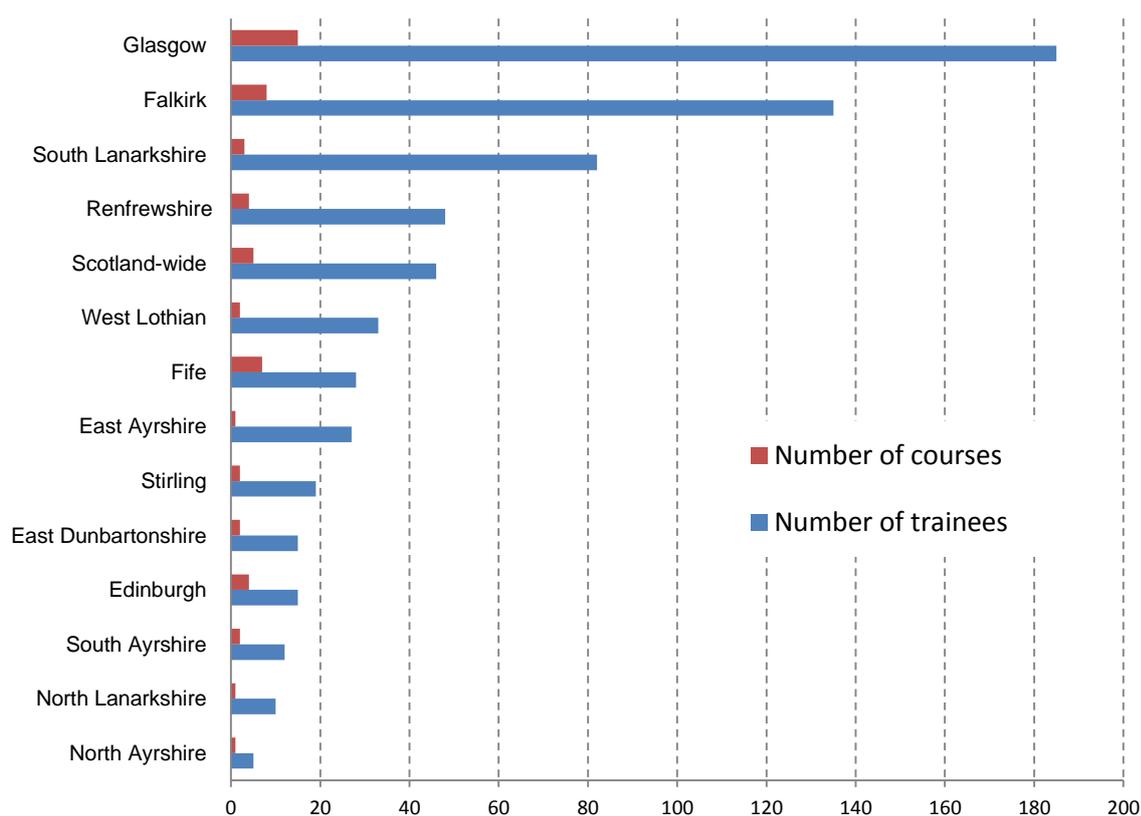
Proportion of courses per region



Considering these data on a Local Authority basis, the bar chart below shows clearly that:

- Glasgow, Falkirk and South Lanarkshire accounted for 61% of all the training activity within the CSGN area.
- Although Edinburgh had 4 courses (more than most other Local Authorities except Glasgow, Falkirk and Fife) it only accounted for 15 individual trainees or 2% of the total.

Courses and training places by Local Authority, 2012.



3.6 Activities

- In terms of what types of activities the trainees are engaged in: 26 of the 31 schemes included woodland management, 26 habitat enhancement, 26 footpath improvement, 24 litter removal, 19 landscaping works, 14 fencing and boundary, 13 horticulture and 10 built infrastructure and signage.
- Several activities mentioned contributed towards certificates including practical horticulture, LANTRA (eg woodchippers operation), NPTC, TCV , SQA, NPTC training CS30/31, CS32, CS34, CS35, CS48.
Other activities included: *general cleansing; vegetation control including the removal of invasive species and also species monitoring and recording.*
- Some of the more unusual activities were: *stone carving; making skin products out of ingredients in woodlands and the installation of outdoor classrooms; raised beds; turf roof shelters; seating; willow structures and bottle greenhouses.*

3.7 Environmental improvements

- Most environmental improvements were focussed around access and restoration issues. Often these targeted specific beneficiaries such as particular age groups (eg older people) or residents of certain areas (eg severely deprived datazones).
- Other improvements related to biodiversity targets such as improving habitats for bats, fish and birds, as well as creation of a richer greenspace environment including wildflower meadows and hedgerow planting.
- One example of a benefit to the local community came from a woodland improvement scheme. The footpath improvements and woodland management undertaken by trainees has led to a higher level of use of the woodland by local people. What had been perceived as an unsafe and poorly maintained area, has now become a destination that people want to visit.

It was not possible to get complete records which detailed all the physical improvements undertaken through these schemes. However, East Ayrshire Woodlands ILM was able to provide details as to what its' 27 trainees achieved during 2012:

- 21ha of woodland planted
- 1.5ha woodland felled
- 2.5km of stock fencing constructed
- 350m of footpath and steps constructed
- 17.8ha of spot weeding
- 1 timber footbridge constructed (6m span)
- Installation of various seats, signs, gates etc:

Outside this Audit, the CSGN supported Fife Core Path Improvement Project (due for completion later this year) aims to improve over 93km of Core Paths in Fife using 16 trainees.

Previous to these programmes, comparable schemes implemented by the Wise Group in the 1990s indicated that 24 trainees can undertake woodland creation and management works and related access improvements to an area of around 25ha per year.

3.8 Outputs

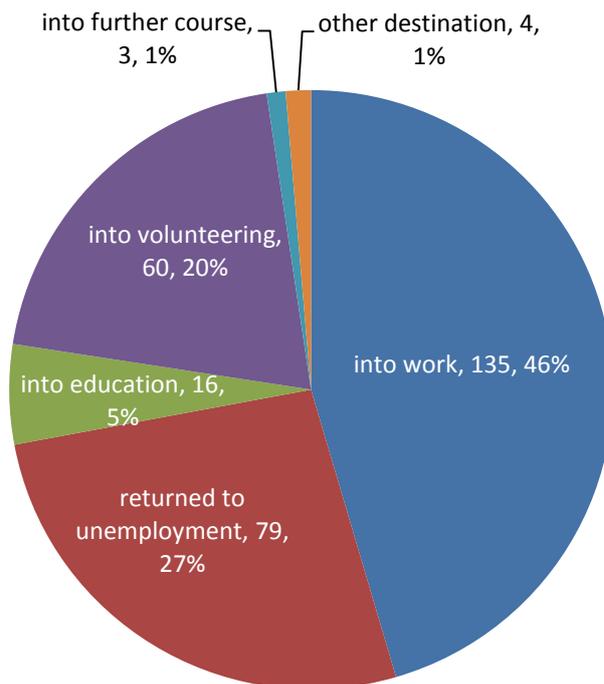
When considering the implications of these data, it should be noted that we were only able to obtain follow-on data regarding less than half of all trainees and that these figures are reported by the training providers themselves and have not been verified by an independent third party.

- Of the 297 individual trainees for which we have additional data, 46% (or 135) went directly into employment. This figure is a lot higher than we anticipated so a brief comparative review was conducted (which is explored in Section 4) and the conclusion was that it was not unduly high.
- 27% returned to unemployment, 20% went into volunteering, 5% went into education and 1% undertook a further course.
- The smaller pie charts below show that the highest proportion of trainees going into employment was in Ayrshire, although actual numbers were small. Conversely, the

lowest proportion moving into employment was within the Glasgow Clyde Valley region, but due to high overall figures, it accounted for the greatest number of trainees obtaining a job.

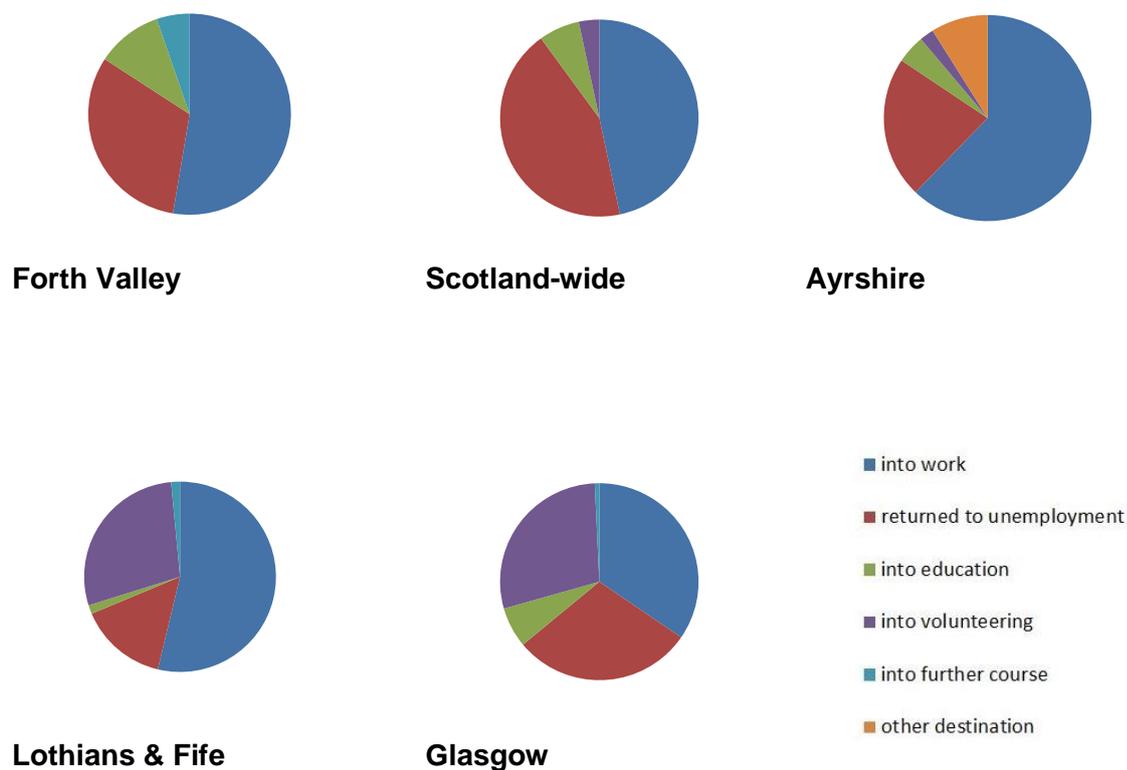
- The Scotland-wide projects had the highest proportion of trainees returning to unemployment, however again the numbers were actually quite small
- In most other respects, there was relatively little difference between the regions.

Trainee outputs cross the CSGN area, 2012.



- into work
- returned to unemployment
- into education
- into volunteering
- into further course
- other destination

Trainee outputs cross the CSGN regions, 2012.



3.9 Outcomes

Most organisations considered **qualifications** as an outcome goal. There was a rich variety of vocational certificates and formal awards mentioned. These were invariably recognised and administered by bodies such as the Scottish Qualifications Authority and LANTRA. They included (listed alphabetically):

- Bailiffing
- Ecological surveying
- Electro fishing
- Employability Award
- Environmental Conservation
- Fencing
- First Aid
- Horticulture
- Manual Handling
- Mini digger qualification
- Pesticide application
- Power boat level 2
- Power tools training (brushcutter, clearing saw, chainsaw, chipper, pole pruners)
- REHIS elementary food hygiene
- Ride-on roller
- Routeway construction
- Tree survey & inspection
- Woodland Management & Forestry.

Many of the young people who took part in the training programmes had no formal qualifications. One provider commented that in their experience the training had allowed a number of young people who have never achieved a qualification to progress to gain their first accredited certificate.

In addition, some initiatives encouraged people with learning difficulties; others reported that their trainees had challenging backgrounds or criminal records. Providers reported that the skills gained on these courses can be crucial in making young people, and especially young people who have faced challenges in their lives, more attractive to employers.

Other outcomes identified tended to focus on skills gained. These included practical outdoor based experiences such as:

- Arboriculture
- Construction work
- Craftwork
- Food Growing
- Horticulture knowledge
- Risk Assessment,

and also indoor based 'soft' skills related to making respondents more employable:

- Budgeting
- Computer skills
- CV building
- Form filling
- Interview techniques
- Job search
- Problem solving.

However, several skills were **less tangible** and although not easily definable as a taught element of the courses, are considered to be **critical in making the trainees more job-ready** and able to stay in employment once they gained a job:

- Adaptability
- Better attitude to work & work ethic
- Enhanced enthusiasm for work
- Goal setting.
- Personal responsibility
- Social skills and communications
- Teamworking
- Timekeeping

One young person commented on their experience:

The programme is all about teaching young folk to adapt to working life, helping you to understand what employers want and giving you the skills but also the confidence to make your life better.

Another young person, who went on to gain employment locally, said:

I really really enjoyed it. It helped me loads with my confidence and helped me move on from sitting around the house all day to coming out with you and doing different things all the time. It was a really good experience and a real test of my skill...

Lastly, several organisations identified the personal progression of many trainees as they undertook the courses, helping them to develop as individuals and members of the wider society:

- Better appreciation of own strengths and weaknesses
- Better physical health and well-being
- Improved motivation
- Improved sense of worth /self esteem
- More likely to volunteer
- Reduced benefit dependency
- Self reliance.

Although information collected related solely to work undertaken in 2012, some of the training had been on-going for several years. For example, one provider reported that over 1,000 certificated qualifications had been achieved by participants and that their training had helped 101 long-term unemployed people into work. Another had used their experience of the local area to tailor the source to ensure the skills learned by the young people would match with what local employees required. One example was a lack of civil engineering training in one area, which is being addressed by a provider teaching the use of mini-diggers and rollers.

4. Costs and investment

As might be anticipated there was a wide variety in costs for the implementation and running of each of the courses/programmes. Figures were difficult to obtain and it is not clear whether all the overheads, initial capital expenditure, and unspecified support costs are included in the returns from the training providers. However, 12 of the organisations were able to provide overall costs. These totalled nearly £1.7 million, ranging individually from £14,350 to £340,000 with the mean average per programme being 139,000 .

An attempt to estimate a rough cost of each course on a per trainee basis was made for 16 of the courses for which data were available. Again the range of these data was remarkable reflecting both the length of courses and the assortment of activities and training undertaken. The smallest figure was £60 per head and the largest was £19,290. The mean average was £7,238 per head for a course and the median average **cost was £6,225 per person for a course lasting circa 24 weeks, or something in the region of £52 per trainee, per day.** In context this is a little more expensive than the average cost of £5,600 per individuals for the Future Jobs Fund (based on Jan 2011 data for a 26 week course).

5. Extrapolations and informed modelling

As mentioned above, a positive outcome of 46% into employment was initially considered to be high and various reasons were suggested as to why this might be the case. For example, there was a suspicion that the sample was skewed towards respondents who were happy to report on their positive figures, whilst other respondents who (on the face of it) had less impressive results were unwilling to provide this information. A brief comparative study looked at the employment outputs from three other intervention projects. The results were: *Youthbuild* 70%; *Future Jobs fund* 43%; and *Get Ready for Work* 23%³. Although these schemes are all different, the client groups are similar and the results provide some credence on the return of 46% into employment suggested by our study.

The findings suggest that if we wanted to provide outdoor based training courses for all of the CGSN's 65,000 unemployed 16-24 year olds, it would cost circa £405 million and this would have the potential to make around 46% of them (nearly 30,000) 'job ready'. Obviously, this does not necessarily mean that the present labour market can supply vacancies for all these job seekers, but it is safe to conclude that all the individuals would be much more employable after such a course than they were before it. And, as mentioned above, they would have the potential of making personal improvements to their lives - the

³ *Future Jobs Fund – An Independent National Evaluation*. Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion, July 2011

benefits of which are immense and long lasting with profound positive social and economic value.

Turning attention to purely economic considerations, it costs around £3,000 per year to keep a young person on job seekers allowance within the UK⁴. However, as studies show, this is not the true cost to the tax payer. Additional costs push this figure much higher, depending on the individual. A conservative estimate for the annual cost of a young jobseeker would be £5,400 (but it could be as high as £16,000)⁵. Therefore the overall annual cost to society for supporting 65,000 unemployed 16-24 year olds within the CSGN area is at least £351 million.

From the figures revealed in our research, we estimate that the training of 677 young people cost around £8 million. Using the figures mentioned above, this is more than twice the estimated cost to the tax payer (£3.7 million) using the minimum figure. However it is nearly £3 million less than if the maximum figure is used.

Using the minimum figure again, if all the 650,000 young unemployed people within the CSGN area were given the opportunity to undertake some training, and 46% of them found employment and stayed in work for one year, it would save the Exchequer some £161 million or 40% of the cost of the courses. Using the same calculation, if the first job for these proposed trainee graduates only lasted for half a year this would still save some £80 million in costs. However, as noted above this is purely a short term perspective at looking at the return on investment, as acknowledged by more rigorous cost benefit analysis models the true impact comes from a long term evaluation and is much higher see Appendix 1.

In terms of quantifiable physical outputs, again using the East Ayrshire Woodlands ILM as a guide, we could anticipate that this 1,600 strong workforce could undertake, in a year, circa:

- 1,900km of paths upgraded and maintained
- 1,200ha of woodland planted
- 90ha woodland felled
- 20km of footpath and steps constructed
- 1,000ha of spot weeding
- 150km of stock fencing constructed
- 60 timber footbridges constructed.

Or, if we use the Wise Group as an example of what can be achieved, a £10 million annual investment could provide around 1,700ha of woodland creation, management and associated access works.

⁴ Job Seekers Allowance for 16-24 year olds is £56.25 per week or £2,925 per year

⁵ Prince's Trust –The Cost of Exclusion 2010 http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/COE_full_report.pdf

6. Recommendations

As outlined in the CSGN Work Plan 2013-16, conducting the Audit and extrapolating the data was first and second of five actions designed to achieve the stated CSGN Milestone of providing information which will help to create more training activity to take place. As next steps we intend to undertake the following steps:

6.1 Future research

In addition to the information collected, the consultants were also provided with information on environmental training programmes and other relevant initiatives which either started in 2013 or are planned to start in the near future. Twelve organisations, including some large providers and local authorities mentioned forthcoming training. In one local authority, already catering for a substantial number of trainees, the number of places will increase by around a quarter. The most significant development, mentioned by several contacts during this work, is the creation of the Rural Skills Academy. Several contacts from these initiatives made it clear that they were interested in the findings from the study and would be willing to contribute to further research. It is recommended the CSGN Support Unit should share our learning and monitor the progress of these organisations.

6.2 Engage with Training Providers and Partners

It was apparent during this work that it is difficult to track all the training that is taking place and data regarding trainee outputs and outcomes is sometimes sketchy. Furthermore, not all relevant information can be collected; organisations were unable rather than unwilling to provide some of the information requested. It is suggested that the CSGN could do more to encourage good quality data to be collected. This could be advanced through proper dissemination of this report and additional guidance to relevant organisations, highlighting the need to ensure effective and consistent monitoring systems are in place from the start of each programme. Also a more rigorous approach to data gathering could be applied to organisations directly funded through the CSGN (eg via the Development Fund) or partner agencies, placing the collection of high quality data as a pre-requisite for funds being released. Making clear the information required at the outset will make it easier for providers to record these data.

This engagement and correspondence with Partners and potential providers of relevant training schemes fits in with CSGN workplan action to provide CSGN partners with tailored data to encourage development of further programmes.

6.3 Identification of Local Need

Identifying the skills needed locally is important; if young people can gain the skills required by local employers as well as the employability skills offered by the training courses, the chance of securing employment will be that much greater. This is explored more fully in Appendix 1.

Where relevant, we would suggest that the CSGN Support Unit ask whether this has been undertaken when assessing Development Fund applications (or other types of grants).

Highlighting the benefits of teaching locally-needed skills could be done through good practice guidance or updates.

6.4 Create and Disseminate Case Studies

Another action identified in the work plan is to prepare case studies which will demonstrate to CSGN partners what can be achieved. Following the research conducted as part of this Audit, this work is in progress. The six case studies under review for selection are: Cassiltoun Trust Employability Programme (Glasgow); Future Jobs Fund (West Lothian); Get Some Credit (CSGN-wide); East Ayrshire Woodlands' ILM programme (East Ayrshire); Living Solutions (Fife) and Urban Roots (Glasgow).

6.5 Prepare a Report to the Scottish Government

The last action identified in the Work Plan was to submit a report to the Scottish Government setting out what was achieved and seeking endorsement of the approach and a commitment to continue to support environmentally-based training for unemployed people. As outlined in the report, it is estimated that in 2010, youth unemployment was costing the UK economy more than £155 million per week in benefits payments and lost productivity, the costs of youth crime were put at another £23 million per week.

The CSGN will forward a report to the Scottish Government demonstrating the economic, social and environmental case for developing more outdoor based training schemes within the CSGN area.

7. Conclusions

Though it is recognised that the audit is not as complete as we might have hoped, it is possible to consider the general implications of the research and make some valid conclusions.

Almost half (46%) of trainees within the CSGN area have gone on to employment. Figures from across the UK would indicate that the savings which will have resulted from this are widespread and extend beyond just savings in benefit payments. In addition, the training activities reported in this document also offer considerable environmental and community benefits.

Whilst the labour market intervention schemes taking place within the CSGN area could be considered costly in the short-term, in the long-term the advantages to the individual and the wider society are cumulative and ultimately will produce a high return on this investment in terms of individual wellbeing, productivity and citizenship and contribute towards the physical development of the CSGN.

Appendix 1 – A Note on Evaluating Youth Employment Schemes

Benefit payments are not the only saving from employment schemes. The consultants accessed a number of recent publications relating to youth unemployment and training. The findings from these reports are relevant for youth unemployment issues across the country and indeed across the EU.

A memo on the Youth Guarantee Scheme⁶ from the EU Commission in May 2013 'EU measures to tackle youth unemployment' comments that the estimated total cost for establishing Youth Guarantee schemes would be 0.45% of the eurozone's GDP (€21 billion). The costs of unemployment, inactivity and lost productivity were put at 1.21 % of GDP (€153 billion). It added 'In addition, for young people themselves, being unemployed at a young age can have a long-lasting negative 'scarring effect'. These young people face not only higher risks of future unemployment, but also higher risks of exclusion, of poverty and of health problems.'

A 2012 report from The ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment: 'Youth unemployment: the crisis we cannot afford'⁷, highlighted the 'forgotten half'; those young people who do not progress to further education, employment or training and who go on to access support from a range of different government departments and agencies "as they deal with issues relating to their housing, mental health, drug or alcohol abuse, care packages, carer services, education and so on – and often their progression into further education or work will be dependent on resolving these issues." The report detailed a NEET (not in employment, education or training) pilot from one area in England which found "that the 24 organisations dealing with NEETs were spending more than £8 million per year on services (of which approximately £400,000 was spent on administration) and more than £9 million on benefits".

One of the main recommendations from this report was the need for education and training and preparation for work to be seen as key to improving job prospects; the majority of the training initiatives detailed in the CSGN work cover both of these points, offering both qualifications and/or specific skills training alongside softer employability skills.

The Prince's Trust estimated that in 2010, youth unemployment was costing the UK economy more than £155 million **per week** in benefits payments and lost productivity, the costs of youth crime were put at another £23 million **per week**. The Foreword to their report: 'The Cost of Exclusion. Counting the cost of youth disadvantage in the UK'⁸ stresses the benefits of addressing this situation: 'By giving young people who have been left behind in life a second chance, we can not only help change young lives; we can help address the deficit, lift the load on the taxpayer and strengthen communities across the UK.'

It would seem from the evidence available, albeit that this evidence is either from larger areas or from areas in other parts of the UK, that the costs of training schemes such as those in the CSGN area will be far outweighed by their value; both financially and socially.

A 2012 report from the Manpower Group 'Youth Unemployment Challenge and Solutions. What Business can do now'⁹ identifies a lack of skills relevant to the workplace and a lack of experience and credentials as two of the reasons young people struggle to gain employment. In its 'Hidden Talents'¹⁰ report, the Local Government Association also stress

⁶ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-464_en.htm

⁷ http://www.cesi.org.uk/sites/default/files/event_downloads/ACEVO_report.pdf

⁸ http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/COE_full_report.pdf

⁹ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/Manpower_YouthEmploymentChallengeSolutions_2012.pdf

¹⁰ http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=fcd201b-8f62-43fc-b586-0bb3fc0ef72d&groupId=10171

the need for both integrated services and also to match the training young people to with the skills that local employers need.

A 2013 report from the Department of Business innovation and Skills: “Youth Unemployment: Review of Training for Young People with Low Qualifications”¹¹ identified ‘five factors that are associated with more successful training interventions’:

- Targeting eligibility
- Smaller scale programmes
- A focus on work experience and the transition to work
- Addressing wider barriers to employment to tackle multiple disadvantage
- A joined up approach to tackle unemployment locally

Many of the schemes in the CSGN area took one or more of the first three of these factors into account; conversations with local authority providers also indicate that other factors are being addressed in many areas.

It may be that closer links or joint working between local authority education departments and the other agencies delivering environmental training could lead to more placements and could also lead to stronger outcomes; local needs and issues and well as potential trainees may be more readily identified and addressed through joint working.

The need to ensure that the skills being taught are relevant to the skills needed locally is also important and, as mentioned earlier, this is already being addressed by some of the training providers in the CSGN area.

While it is not possible to put a cost on the environmental benefits, the anecdotal evidence from the contacts made during this work indicates that these schemes are improving local wildlife, habitats and greenspace. In addition, they are making the local environment more accessible and attractive, and some contacts report increased use of these areas which may well be improving the health and well-being of local residents.

¹¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/70226/bis-13-608-youth-unemployment-review-of-training-for-young-people-with-low-qualifications.pdf