

PUBLIC

**Minutes of a Meeting of Skills Assessment Council
held on Wednesday 24 April 2024 at 1000hrs in the Liberation Room.**

Present:	Amanda Curry Brown	Director of Policy, Economy & Corporate Services
	Roddy Cordeiro	Policy Advisor
	Sarah Stannard	Director of Education
	Jim Horton	Head of Immigration
	Ariane Brownlee	Organisation & Workforce Development Officer
	Marvin Clarke	Community Representative
	Stacy Bragger	FIDC Representative
	Maggie Battersby	Chamber of Commerce Representative (via Teams)
	Carl Stroud	FITA Representative
	Sally Quarton	MoD Civilian People Manager
	Vanessa Sartorel	MoD Business Support Officer
	Ross Weir	FIG Management Trainee
Apologies:	James Bates	FIFCA Representative
	Stephen Dougan	MoD Command Secretary
	Phyll Rendell	RBA Representative
Minutes:	Helen McShane	Policy Officer

Meeting commenced at 1000hrs

1. Introductions

The group conducted a roundtable of introductions to welcome four new Council members and FIG's Management Trainee who was attending the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were given by:

- James Bates, FIFCA Representative
- Phyll Rendell, RBA Representative
- Stephen Dougan, MoD Command Secretary

3. Review of Previous Minutes & Action Taken- 23 October 2023

Item 3.1 (Review Workforce Shortage List)- A review of the Workforce Shortage List is scheduled for 2025. Raised in Item 6.

Item 4.2 (Workforce Development Strategy)- The Strategy was approved at the November 2023 ExCo meeting. A draft implementation plan was sent to the group prior to the meeting for comment and discussion in Item 5.

Item 5.4 (Future of the Skills Assessment Council- TOR)- The Terms of Reference were approved alongside the Workforce Development Strategy at the November 2023 ExCo meeting. Allowance for two additional representatives was confirmed: a FITA representative, and an additional community representative. An application was received for the community representative after a round of advertising (considered in Item 4)

Minutes were confirmed as accurate; no further changes were made.

It was noted that there would be a change in practice for minute-taking, and that more complete versions would be published in future, as opposed to a public summary. Any commercially or

PUBLIC

personally sensitive items raised in future meetings to be disclosed and any information not for publication to be redacted accordingly.

4. **Future of Skills Assessment Council- Update**

The group considered an application that had been received in response to advertisements for an additional community rep. Concerns were raised that there had not been enough publicity regarding what the expectations of the role a community representative was, both in terms of time and input; and that this might have put off other potentially interested individuals.

It was felt that the council needed to be more proactive in getting the word out- publicising who sits on the Skills Assessment Council, with clearer explanation of the council's functions, and the expectations of the role of a community representative. To ensure fairness, it was suggested that the position should be re-advertised and supported by a media campaign.

The group agreed that the existing application would be considered in conjunction with any potential applications received during the re-advertising exercise; ideally resulting in an appointment being made prior to the next meeting. Input from the group would be sought via email.

5. **Workforce Strategy- Draft Implementation Plan**

The Policy Adviser, Policy, Economy & Corporate Services summarised the actions of the draft implementation plan, which had been shared with the group prior to the meeting. It was noted that several actions fell to the Education department, as part of the Further Education review. The plan also highlighted the work being done by the Education department to build links and engagement between employers and students.

As part of the work centred around recruitment and integration, it was noted that FIGO were working on creating a formal diaspora network in the UK, the aim of this being to provide a central hub for Falkland Islanders who have been away from the Islands for a period of time, containing up-to-date information around the social aspects of life in the Falklands, and the benefits and services currently available.

Research conducted by the former Labour Force Development Specialist, Policy, Economy & Corporate Service into web portals developed by other countries or regions to encourage prospective employees to move and work there, had been re-established. It was agreed that developing a web portal like this was a popular idea, though currently there was a lack of consensus on who would lead on the project, or how it would be funded and maintained once built. A proposal to MLAs would be required to outline what this portal would like, and who would be involved. The Chair noted that there had been private sector interest in developing this project but had not received a specific proposal.

It was queried whether sufficient consultation had taken place with the Chamber regarding the WDS implementation plan. It was confirmed that initial conversations had taken place, though due to time elapsed due to Policy, Economy & Corporate Services being pulled to other projects, and the to churn of people involved in past conversations, it would be worth re-establishing discussions with the Chamber's new Executive Secretary.

Whilst noted that actions on the implementation plan were more FIG-focused due to falling within FIG's remit, it was agreed that there was scope for the Chamber to more involved.

PUBLIC

It was noted that recruitment was a wider issue which also impacted private sector companies, so any portal would need to reflect requirements of both FIG and the private sector. The group agreed that a meeting needed to be set up between FIG, FIDC and the Chamber to resume discussions around the project. A progress update would be shared at the next meeting.

In terms of recruitment actions, it was confirmed that Human Resources were reviewing job descriptions and exploring different ways in which skills can be assessed at the interview stage. They have begun implementing changes in new job descriptions.

For actions related to Customs and Immigration, The Head of Immigration confirmed work was ongoing to ensure the application process continues to become more streamlined. Flow charts to provide guidance on the Falkland Islands Status process have been made downloadable from the Customs web page and are being accessed by the public.

Ongoing work in FIG to support succession planning, and the implementation of the management trainee programme was shared with the group, and there was discussion around whether there might be potential for the Chamber to contribute to this work and widen scope to include the private sector.

The group agreed that the implementation plan should be updated on a six-monthly basis, and updates reported as an action point in future meetings. It was also agreed that quarterly meetings should be re-established with the Chamber to continue the flow of information.

6. **Workforce Shortage List**

The Chair confirmed that as updates of the workforce shortage list occur on a 3-yearly basis, the next update was due in 2025. The group were asked for their views on the usefulness of the list and the process of updating it; and whether the amount of work required to conduct the survey was proportionate, as it was expected that Policy, Economy & Corporate Services would lack capacity to conduct a full workforce survey within the next 6-9 months as had been done previously.

The Chair asked what impact the list had on Customs and CDS procedure. The Head of Immigration stated that the list had more impact on the PRP process (with items on the list providing 5 points) as jobs had to be advertised whether they were on the list or not.

The Director of Education added that whilst the list helped to focus people when making decisions around granting funding requests it was not a complete block to funding capacity, and that other eligibility criteria were also considered.

Discussion was held as to whether there was an argument for the relevance of the workforce shortage list in its current form. Ultimately, it was felt that as the 5 points awarded for professions on the list could impact PRP applications, MLA input should be sought before any decisions were taken. It was agreed that further steer from MLAs regarding the future of the workforce shortage list was needed before proceeding with updates or other outcomes.

7. **Department of Education Update**

PUBLIC

The Director of Education provided an update on Higher Education data for 2024. Data was focused on degrees, apprenticeships, NVQs and CDS-funded further training, which tend to be more specialised within a particular field or sector.

Points of note included:

- Some Higher Education subjects currently being studied had direct ties to careers in the Falkland Islands, such as Hospitality and Tourism Management, Agricultural Business Management, Nursing, Media, Marketing, Law, Economics and Marine Biology.
- Most Apprentices were studying in construction trades or engineering, but no students were currently being funded by the Higher Education Policy in those areas, which was surprising given skills shortage and demand in those sectors.
- Three quarters of CDS students were female.

The council agreed that future updates like this were useful, and discussed points raised in the document. The Director of Education clarified queries around whether there are age limits for apprenticeships and confirmed that there are no age limits, and which vocational programmes were currently available to study in the Islands.

An update was requested on eligibility for PRP holders applying for higher education. The Director of Education confirmed that work was being done to review this as part of the wider post-16 review. It was explained that it is necessary for UK student visas to be obtained for students with British Overseas Territory Citizen passports or other passports who are eligible for FIG funding but who require a visa to study in the UK. This is a particular issue for students who wish to study certain level 2 courses, such as Hospitality, as visas are only available for level 3 courses and above. It was emphasised that whilst work is being done to try and address these immigration issues with the UK, student visa requirements are set for all countries, and are not just specific to the Falkland Islands.

The group discussed issues and constraints affecting the Construction sector which affected capacity for training. Discussion was had around whether more interaction could be had with companies operating at MPC, though it was felt that due to capacity to complete contracts under specific timeframes it was unlikely further opportunities would be available outside of those currently offered.

8. **Any Other Business**

None declared.

9. **Summary of Actions from meeting**

Item 4.3 (Future of Skills Assessment Council)- Respond to the Community representative applicant and hold application for consideration at the next meeting. Re-advertisement of the position with a supporting media campaign to be organised and outcomes shared at the next meeting.

Item 5 (Workforce Strategy- Draft Implementation Plan)- Provide a progress update on the implementation plan at the next meeting and organise to meet with the Chamber and FIDC to discuss options for a community portal (feedback also to be provided at the next meeting).

Item 6 (Workforce Shortage List)- The Chair to meet with MLAs to determine the way forward for the Workforce Shortage List. Outcomes of this to be shared with the group via email before the next meeting.

10. **Confirmation of Date of Next Meeting**

Next meeting to be held in October 2024.