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**Minutes of a Meeting of Skills Assessment Council
held on Thursday 24 October 2024 at 1000hrs in the PWD Conference Room.**

Present:	Amanda Curry-Brown	Director of Policy, Economy & Corporate Services	(Chair)
	Roddy Cordeiro	Policy Advisor	PA
	Jenny Smith	Immigration Officer	IO
	Marvin Clarke	Community Representative	Comm Rep
	Jane Clarke	FIDC Representative	FIDC Rep
	Lee Martin	Chamber of Commerce Representative	CoC Rep
	Carl Stroud	FITA Representative	FITA Rep
	Vanessa Sartorel	MoD Business Support Officer	MoD BSO
	Phyll Rendell	RBA Representative	RBA Rep

Apologies:	Sarah Stannard	Director of Education	DoE
	Maggie Battersby	Chamber of Commerce Representative	CoC Rep
	Ariane Brownlee	HR Service Manager	HRSM
	Hilary McFarland	Organisation & Workforce Development Officer	OWDO

Minutes:	Helen McShane	Records Management & Archives Support Officer	SO
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Meeting commenced at 1000hrs

Action

1. Introductions

1.1 The group conducted a roundtable of introductions to welcome the new FIDC Representative.

2. Apologies

2.1 Apologies were given by:

- Sarah Stannard, Director of Education
- Hilary McFarland, HR Service Manager
- Ariane Brownlee, Organisation & Workforce Development Officer
- Maggie Battersby, Chamber of Commerce Representative
- James Bates, FIFCA Representative

3. Review of Previous Minutes & Action Taken- 24 April 2024

3.1 *Item 2.1 (Apologies)- Correction to previous minutes to amend James Bates's title from FITA Representative to FIFCA Representative.* SO

Item 4.3 (Future of the Skills Assessment Council- Additional Community Representative)- The application received was held for consideration whilst the position was re-advertised, accompanied by a supporting media campaign. This result in one additional application, to be considered in Item 4 alongside the previous submission.

Item 5 (Workforce Development Strategy)- The draft implementation plan was agreed at the last meeting, with any updates on actions to be provided in Item 5 of this agenda.

Item 6 (Review Workforce Shortage List)- A steer from MLAs still to be provided, and Chair to open discussion on next steps in Item 6 of this agenda.

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

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

4.1 Chair informed the group that one additional application had been received in response to re-advertisement for an additional community rep. Chair affirmed that the additional post was intended to balance the composition of the group, which currently is employer heavy.

4.2 Comm Rep also questioned whether the media campaign that accompanied the re-advertising exercise had generated sufficient public engagement, and wondered whether there was scope for a focus group to enable the public to become more involved. Chair agreed that there could be potential to incorporate into the existing Gilbert House focus group initiative, and to discuss this with the lead.

DPECS
Team/ All

4.3 The group discussed both applications and it was agreed that the initial applicant be offered the position, due to their significant engagement with the future workforce and community outreach experience. Chair requested PA to respond to both applicants and discuss scheduling arrangements with the successful applicant.

DPECS

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

5.1 PA provided the following updates received on actions from the implementation plan, which had been approved by the group at the previous meeting.

5.2 *Skills and Education-* work was ongoing on the Post-16 Education review, focusing on equalising accessibility for funding and eligibility requirements. Other actions, such as Careers Day, continue to be completed on an annual or biannual basis.

5.3 *Recruitment and Integration-* the proposal for the Diaspora portal will be submitted to ExCo for approval in November. There had been some discussion prior to submission around who the target audience would be, consensus being that it should be an inclusive platform for anyone who sees the Falkland Islands as 'home', providing accessibility to information and support to those wishing to return.

5.4 PA confirmed that the tender had been launched for provision of a recruitment and relocation website for the Falkland Islands. The tender was comprised of two elements: Content creation and management, and Website design and management the closing date for both being in early November 2024.

5.5 Comm Rep commented on lack of recurrent advertising for continued vacant posts within FIG. Chair agreed that this issue required attention, and that options should be considered to reduce the level of effort on departments to keep advertisements open if required instead of having to continuously re-advertise.

DPECS/HR

5.6 *Retention-* IO confirmed that the roll-out of the updated system for online work permit applications was still to be determined, and emphasised the importance of employers informing Customs and Immigration when a work permit requires cancellation to avoid confusion if an individual returns to the Islands outside of their previous contract. CoC Rep suggested that work permit rules could be re-advertised through the Chamber to provide a reminder for employers.

CoC/C&I

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- 5.7 PA confirmed that work was ongoing to identify career pathways, and to enable progression through grade and post from lower levels of experience by offering double or triple graded role options.
- 5.8 Work would also be continued on an initiative with the Careers team, to set up a standard process for offering short work placements in FIG for returning HE and FE students, as opposed to ad-hoc arrangements.
- 5.9 Some discussion was had around whether College students were allowed to take on any paid employment whilst studying overseas. Due to lack of consensus on current procedures in the absence of an education representative at the meeting, Chair agreed to discuss with DoE and feed back to the group. DPECS/
Education
- 5.10 Regarding minimising the impacts of churn and implementing processes to minimise impacts, PA noted recent work by SO to update and develop the HR Welcome Guides which are now available to download on the FIG Job Vacancies web page. Feedback on the guides had been positive, and the group agreed there was potential for some aspects to be fed into the content of the recruitment portal once established.
- 5.11 PA also confirmed that the FIG records retention policy has been implemented and rolled out to departments to limit the loss of corporate knowledge due to churn.
- 6. Workforce Shortage List**
- 6.1 Chair provided context around the initiation of the Workforce Shortage list for new members and explained that whilst it was still used to help award PRP points, the list was no longer used for its intended purpose of removing the requirement of advertising for certain roles requiring work permits.
- 6.2 The group were asked for their views on the usefulness of the list, and whether they were minded to recommend reducing it to a more targeted list of jobs. Chair pointed out that this would reduce the number of people who had enough points to be eligible for PRP but would also help to focus on more specific job requirements and current skills gaps. Chair also stated that there would be further opportunity to feed into this discussion after the meeting, and before any recommendations were taken to MLA's.
- 6.3 IO suggested repeating a similar analysis to one carried out in 2017, which had helped Customs & Immigration to better classify the work permits issued, identifying gaps and organising a large range of jobs into smaller, classified groups. If applied to the Workforce Shortage list, it could provide a better steer for PRP points. It was agreed that this exercise would be beneficial in reviewing the current list. C&I
- 6.4 Chair added that the current review of the Economic Development Strategy could also feed into the review, and further identify skills gaps that would enhance the current list. DPECS
- 6.5 CoC Rep informed the group that a letter from Chamber members requesting removal of the PRP cap had been sent to MLA's, and questioned whether if the cap were to be removed, if the Workforce Shortage List would still be required. Chair stated that whilst there was no unified aspiration to remove the cap, this could be one of the recommendations submitted to MLA's.

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6.6 RBA rep acknowledged issues around churn and retaining knowledge in the workforce but felt that the issue was bigger than people staying in jobs and getting PRP, and that some measure was needed to ensure that they could assimilate into society, and that the current infrastructure of our small community could cope as a result of any changes to the immigration process.

6.7 Chair stated that similar considerations had already been raised by MLA's, and that detailed analysis would take place before any potential change took place.

7. **Any Other Business**

7.1 Comm Rep reinforced point in Item 5.5 and that this may need to be discussed further with Chair. CoC Rep noted that private sector companies also did not always have vacancies actively advertised between recruitment efforts.

7.2 RBA Rep stated that initiatives offered by FIG and FIDC to support small businesses with overseas recruitment were very much welcomed, and beneficial for the rural community.

8.. **Summary of Actions from meeting**

8.1 Item 4.2 (Future of Skills Assessment Council)- Contact Gilbert House Focus Groups lead to discuss potential of a focus group to gather employment-related views. DPECS TEAM

Item 4.3 (Future of Skills Assessment Council)- Respond to both Community representative applicants and discuss scheduling arrangements with the successful applicant. DPECS

Item 5 (Workforce Strategy- Implementation Plan Update)- Continue to provide a general progress update on the implementation plan actions at the next meeting. ALL

Item 5.5 (Workforce Strategy- Implementation Plan Update)- Explore options for recurring advertisement of vacancies and provide update at next meeting. DPECS/ HR

Item 5.6 (Workforce Strategy- Implementation Plan Update)- Re-advertise employer requirements concerning employee work permits through the CoC. COC/C&I

Item 5.9 (Workforce Strategy- Implementation Plan Update)- Determine the procedures for college students taking on employment whilst studying with DoE and feed back to group. CHAIR

Item 6.3 (Workforce Shortage List)- IO to conduct analysis of work permits and circulate with the group. C&I

Item 6.4 (Workforce Shortage List)- Speak to Policy lead on Economic Development Strategy review and update the group with any comments. DPECS

9. **Confirmation of Date of Next Meeting**

9.1 Next meeting to be held in April 2025, a suitable date to be agreed and arranged via email. SO

Meeting ended at 1100hrs