

Background

Following a review of the Falkland Islands immigration system during 2013 and 2014, Executive Council approved a recommendation to establish a Skills Assessment Council (SAC) with a specific remit to assess and review current and future skill requirements for the Islands. It is intended to provide a formal and independent mechanism to identify labour, skills and training needs across the Islands and to ensure a proactive response to these needs through the immigration system, training provision and other routes.

The Council will be an advisory body to Executive Council, with representation from the public and private sector/local community to ensure all relevant interests are included and to maximise opportunities for the sharing of information and expertise.

Objective

The primary objective of the Skills Assessment Council is to provide practical advice and guidance on skills and workforce development planning for the Falkland Islands.

Purpose

The remit of the Skills Assessment Council is:

- To review current and future employment, skills and training requirements of the Falkland Islands;
- To agree an annual Workforce Shortage List to form the basis of decision making with respect to priorities to be afforded to persons seeking to immigrate to the Falkland Islands on a temporary or permanent basis. The Workforce Shortage List will then inform:
 - The Immigration system as to which Work Permits are to be afforded priority (i.e. identify those occupations in shortage for which work permits are to be issued);
 - The immigration system on how to establish the allocation of points/skills under the PRP process;
 - Employers and the public service as to emerging and future skills and training needs for the domestic labour force in order that they can respectively plan to meet their own skills needs.
- To advise on the skills to be afforded priority in the FIG-funded Community Development Scheme (that provides funding for training in both the public and private sector).
- To evaluate the knock-on effects of the Island's immigration needs in terms of additional employment/skills that will be needed to support increases in population (e.g. implications for education and health services; other supporting services needed to support population growth etc.)
- As appropriate, members will commit to identifying and taking forward industry-led and/or Government-led and/or joint initiatives to identified skills issues in the Islands.

Once fully operational, the Council will make recommendations biennially, with the Workforce Shortage List (and any other recommendations as it sees fit) to be presented to Executive Council in August to enable implementation from 1st September.

Membership

The Skills Assessment Council will comprise a mix of FIG representatives and representatives from each significant commercial sector of the Falkland Islands economy:

- 1 x representative from FIG Education Department
- 1 x representative from the FIG Immigration Service
- FIG Head of Policy (or designated representative)
- 1 x representative from the FIG Human Resources Department
- 4 x representatives of commercial sectors of the Falkland Islands economy
- 1 x representative of skills/employment needs at Mount Pleasant Complex
- 1 x community representative

The Council will be chaired by the FIG Director of Policy and Economic Development.

Appointments to the Council will be made by the Chair following a fair, objective and transparent process. When appointing members the Chair will ensure that there is adequate consultation with each significant commercial sector of the Falkland Islands economy (which may include consultation with bodies representing them).

Responsibility and Role of the Chair

The Chair is expected to attend all SAC meetings, excepting occasions of illness or personal emergency. The Chair has the responsibility for providing effective leadership of the SAC and:

- Setting the strategic direction of the SAC;
- Appointing members of the Council;
- Overseeing the operation and output of the SAC (in collaboration with the Policy Unit – see below);
- Ensuring that every member of the SAC has the opportunity to be heard and that no view is overlooked;
- Ensuring that the SAC meets at the agreed intervals;
- Circulating SAC reports/recommendations to other relevant bodies as appropriate (e.g. FIG Immigration Review Group; Education Committee, and others).
- Representing the SAC to the public and the media; and
- Reporting the SAC's advice to Executive Council.

Role of SAC Members

SAC members shall not do anything or omit to do anything where that gives rise to a conflict of interest or might reasonably be expected to give rise to a conflict between the functions of the SAC and any private interests. Council members shall have a duty of loyalty to the Council and will be required to put their SAC responsibilities above other outside interests in all SAC meetings and deliberations.

Members are expected to attend all (two) SAC meetings per year. All members, including the Chair, have the responsibility of:

- Attending and contributing to SAC meetings;
- Examining and challenging, if necessary, the assumptions on which advice is formulated;
- Ensuring that the SAC has the opportunity to consider the available evidence on a given issue; contrary views; and, where appropriate, the views of corporate partners before a decision is made;

- Declaring any outside interests (whether personal, financial or other) that may conflict with the interests of the SAC.
- Ensuring that service on the Council is not used for the purposes of promoting your own personal or commercial interests.

Accountability

From time to time, the SAC will report progress and recommendations to Executive Council. Specific papers with recommendations regarding the Islands' Workforce Shortage List and associated implications for the immigration system will be presented to Executive Council for approval on an annual basis.

Meetings and Administration

Meetings will be held bi-annually (every six months) or at the discretion of the Chair. The first meeting would be to set employment and skills priorities for the coming year, with the second meeting being a mid-point review and an opportunity to address any gaps or to highlight additional skills needs that have arisen since the annual Workforce Shortage List was approved.

An inaugural meeting of the Council will be held in January 2015 to brief all parties on the role and function of the group and to agree timeframes and processes for taking forward the work of the Council. This first meeting will also be an opportunity to review the outputs of the Islands' Skills Audit currently being undertaken by the Education Department (results expected in December 2014).

Secretarial support to the Group will be provided by the Policy & Economic Development Directorate.

Additional resource will be provided by the FIG Policy & Economic Development Directorate to enable an annual skills survey to be designed, implemented and analysed under the oversight of the Council. The survey will gather detailed information that will include:

- Future skills needs;
- Current skills shortages and skills gaps;
- Skills and employment needs of new and emerging industries.

The Policy & Economic Development Directorate will also ensure that the Council has access to all relevant information and statistics from other sources, and will provide additional analysis of knock-on (multiplier) effects of identified skills shortages.

Openness and Transparency

The SAC will operate in an open and transparent way. The SAC will make public:

- Details of the SAC's Terms of Reference;
- Membership of the SAC;
- Minutes (after they have been formulated and agreed by the SAC)
 - Minutes will be reflect the proceedings and discussions that take place and will be recorded on a non-attributable basis, except where the views of one or more members need to be recorded (e.g. when declaring an interest);
- Formal reports made by the SAC; and
- Contact points for the administration of the SAC.

