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# MINUTES

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## **UK COMMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS HELD AT S A BRAIN LTD., THE CARDIFF BREWERY, CRAWSHAY ST., CARDIFF**

29 October 2013

### **PRESENT**

Charlie Mayfield  
Michael Davis

Chairman  
Chief Executive

### **COMMISSIONERS**

Barbara Spicer  
Bill McGinnis  
David Fairhurst,  
Douglas McCormick  
Frances O'Grady  
Grahame Smith  
James Wates  
Jeremy Anderson  
John Coyne  
Julie Kenny  
Liz Sayce  
Paul McKelvie  
Scott Johnson  
Scott Waddington  
Sean Taggart  
Seyi Obakin  
Toby Peyton-Jones  
Valerie Todd  
Will Butler-Adams

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Owen Evans, (Director General, Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government), Huw Morris, (Group Director, Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (SHELL), Welsh Government), Simon Perryman, Ian Kinder, Lesley Giles, Sarah Beal, Moira McKerracher, Paul Devoy, Alison Morris, Carol Stanfield, Carol Gault, Daniel Stammers, Jodie McCormack

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Dave Prentis, Deirdre Hughes, Fiona Kendrick, Gail Cartmail, Iqbal Wahhab, John Cridland, Lucy Adams, Nigel Whitehead, Tony Lau-Walker, Victor Adebawale, Andrew Scott, (Scottish Government), Catherine Bell, (DELNI), Rachel Sandby-Thomas (BIS) and Mike Keoghan (Director, Skills & Life Sciences, BIS)

## **1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Chairman welcomed Commissioners and thanked Scott Waddington for hosting the Commission meeting at S A Brain Ltd.

The minutes of the last meeting of the Commission held on 28 June 2013 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

Scott Waddington gave a brief history of the company and then introduced Owen Evans, Director General, Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government.

## **2 WALES – 10 YEAR POLICY STATEMENT ON SKILLS**

Owen Evans introduced Huw Morris who gave a presentation on the Welsh Skills Strategy. Owen Evans updated Commissioners on the Wales 10 Year Policy Statement on Skills and the Welsh Government's approach to employer ownership.

It was noted that the Welsh approach had some excellent examples for engaging employers and common territory with England.

## **3 INVESTMENT**

Commissioners were asked to consider paper **UKCES C [13] 26** and received an update on investments from Professor John Coyne.

GIF and EIF investments were mainly progressing well and the majority would complete their funding phase by the end of this financial year. Twenty-one projects will continue through to spring 2015. There has been an encouraging level of leverage resulting from the projects and new research shows that the economic return looks like it will be healthy, provided investments are sustained over time.

Details were given of progress on Employer Ownership Pilot Rounds 1 and 2. It was noted that, as a small number of projects were expected to drop out, Ministerial agreement had been obtained to move ahead into grant negotiation with three projects that were on the reserve list for Employer Ownership Pilot Round 2.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

## **4 COMMISSIONER INSIGHTS – APPRENTICESHIPS AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

Commissioners considered and noted Paper **UKCES C [13] 27** on progress with Apprenticeship reform in England, details of the Commission's contribution to this and also progress from the Commissioner Task and Finish Group on Youth Employment led by Liz Sayce.

It was noted that Government had confirmed its support for the employer-focused approach recommended by Doug Richard, and, having consulted on how to make it a reality, would shortly publish an Implementation Plan. The reform programme is overseen by a Programme Board within BIS, chaired by Scott Johnson. Scott is ensuring a coherent approach and agreed strategy by the Skills Funding Agency and Education

Funding Agency and policy leads from BIS and DfE. The Board is also assessing progress against the tasks set by Ministers. Although the plan will be launched at the end of October 2013, implementation itself will take a few years. The aim is for all new apprenticeship starts to be based on the new approach from 2017/18.

The UK Commission is actively supporting BIS on key elements of the reform programme: ‘trailblazers’; standards; assessment and certification; evaluation, and funding.

At the Commission meeting in June there was an appetite among Commissioners to be more ambitious on youth employment. It was agreed that a task and finish Commissioner group led by Liz Sayce would discuss this and report back to the Commission meeting in October. The group has held two meetings: Liz, Valerie Todd, Julie Kenny, Tony Lau Walker, Grahame Smith, Deirdre Hughes, Seyi Obakin and Bill McGinnis have attended either one or both of these. Commissioners set out to:

- Establish what we know and what the gaps in our knowledge are
- Take stock of what the UK Commission is already doing
- On the basis of the above, discuss what more could be done at scale.

Commissioners also noted Charlie’s input to the Cabinet Office review of youth employment led by Sir Jeremy Heywood. A paper on good quality work experience led by Julie Kenny was published in October.

## **5 INTELLIGENCE – ACHIEVING THE VISION**

Commissioners considered paper **UKCES C [13] 28** and were asked to note the Research Asset journey which was to develop the Commission’s reputation as “the ‘go-to’ organisation for authoritative business intelligence on skills and employment which better informs choice, policy development and practice.”

Commissioners were updated on the steps taken to achieve this vision, what had been accomplished so far, and considered what more was needed. Grahame Smith informed Commissioners that there was more scope for them to be involved with many aspects of the new Research Group and to contact him for more information.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

## **6 BUILDING MOMENTUM - COMMISSION STRATEGY 2014/2017**

Sir Charlie Mayfield presented a slide pack, paper **UKCES C [13] 29** representing the first phase in developing the Commission’s strategy for 2014/14. Details were given of the progress made over the last three years when the Commission had made encouraging progress in beginning to build a momentum for greater employer ownership of skills in order to transform how the UK invests in skills, as an integral part of wider strategies for jobs and growth. Commissioners were asked to consider the following propositions:

- Overarching purpose
- Strategic approach
- Scope
- Core functions

- Organisational effectiveness
- Developing the Business plan for 14-15
- Critical challenges in relation to propositions offered.

Commissioner contributions to the 2014 -17 strategy were captured and it was **AGREED** that further opportunities be presented for this work to be developed and that this item should be considered further at the January Commission meeting.

## **7 TRIENNIAL REVIEW**

Julie Kenny asked Commissioners to consider paper **UKCES C [13] 30** which updated Commissioners on preparations for the Commission's Triennial Review which would commence in January 2013. Stage 1 would comprise a review of the Commission's key functions to establish if these are still required and also look at the best method for delivery. Following a successful completion of Stage 1, Stage 2 would review the Commission's control and governance arrangements to test compliance with the principles of good corporate governance.

It was reported that SMG were overseeing the preparations which included the commissioning of a board effectiveness review, the findings of which would be presented to the Commission in January 2014 and individual Commissioner self-assessments.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted

## **8 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

The Commission received and **NOTED** update reports and minutes of the meetings of the Strategic Management Group, Audit and Risk Group, Investors in People Group, Investment Group, Research Group and the Adult Vocational Qualification Task and Finish Group, that had taken place since the last meeting of the Commission. It was noted that the Adult Vocational Qualification Task and Finish Group had now closed. The arrangements for tracking the implementation of this Review would take place through the performance management of Outcome 4.