

**MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MIGRATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2007**

Present:

Chair	Professor David Metcalf
Members	Dr Diane Coyle Dr Martin Ruhs Professor Jonathan Wadsworth Professor Robert Wilson Professor Mike Campbell (Ex-officio member) Paula Higson (Government observer)
Secretariat	Mark Franks (Secretary) Stephen Earl Vanna Aldin Andrew Watton Anna Downs Anne Ball
Observer	Andy Honeyman (Border and Immigration Agency)

**Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and introductions**

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Migration Advisory Committee's first meeting. There were brief round the table introductions. The Chair informed the Committee that the Home Secretary had signed off the Committee's 2007/9 work plan and this had been emailed to members the day before the meeting.
2. The Chair told members that during the previous few weeks he had met with representatives from various organisations including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), the National Health Service Workforce Review Team and the Health Skills Council. He had also met with representatives of government departments including the Department for Work and Pensions, the Treasury and Home Office economists. He also explained that he had conducted a number of media interviews.
3. There were no apologies for absence.

**Agenda Item 2 – Definitions and Methodology**

Thoughts on Methodology for Identifying Skill Shortages (Paper 1.1)

4. The secretariat introduced a paper outlining some preliminary thoughts on the methodology for identifying occupations for the shortage occupation list. It also listed potential shortage indicators and outlined other associated issues. The paper explored various options of how to approach these issues and itemised the potential data sources for shortage indicators such as the National Employers Skill Survey, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, the Labour Force Survey, the ONS Vacancy Survey and the British Household Panel Survey.
5. Following the introduction of the Secretariat's paper, four members of the Committee gave presentations: Professor Robert Wilson, Professor Mike Campbell, Professor Jonathan Wadsworth, and Dr Martin Ruhs. Issues covered included the following:
  - how the Committee might define and measure skills and skill shortages;
  - possible indicators and limitations;
  - working with the Sector Skills Councils and other stakeholders;
  - presentation of analysis and results;
  - the need to take a holistic approach to thinking about shortages;
  - the need to consider alternative methods of filling vacancies.
6. The Chair thanked members for their presentations and a short discussion followed.
7. The Chair summed up by saying that the hybrid methodology approach had been agreed; that the Committee would look at a range of indicators; that it would identify national shortages via local data; and, that it was important to define 'sensible' in the context of when migrant labour could be used over alternatives.
8. The secretariat said that it would bring a paper back to the next meeting to outline options for drawing up the Scottish shortage list. It would also produce a paper with options of how the occupation list would be reviewed post-June 2008.

#### Sector Skills Councils Letter

9. The Committee had seen a draft letter from the Chair updating the Sector Skills Councils on the progress of setting up the Committee and outline ways the Committee would engage with them. Members agreed to send in any detailed drafting changes.

#### Outline Structure for January and February Reports (Paper 1.2)

10. The secretariat introduced a paper giving potential outline structures for the January and February 2008 reports.

11. The Committee agreed that the January report would need to be worked up by email as the next meeting was not until the end of January. The secretariat said it would bring a more detailed draft of both papers to the next meeting.

### **Agenda Item 3 – Research**

#### Possible Research Projects (Paper 1.3)

12. The secretariat introduced a paper presenting ideas for possible research projects. The secretariat said there was a need for some quick research work to help inform the June 2008 report, as well as some longer term research requirements.
13. It was agreed that the Committee would reflect on ideas for long-term research and a paper outlining proposals would be brought to a future meeting. Members were encouraged to feed ideas into the secretariat.
14. On options for shorter term research, the Committee identified five possible immediate projects. It was agreed that the secretariat would work with Committee members in developing a procurement strategy to further pursue these projects.

#### Call for Evidence (Paper 1.4)

15. The secretariat outlined a suggestion for a call for evidence. The House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee had recently conducted a call for evidence to help inform its inquiry into the economic impact of immigration. The secretariat set out arguments for and against a call for evidence.
16. After discussion, the Committee concluded that a call for evidence would provide a number of benefits including providing smaller businesses with a channel through which they could influence the Committee's work. It was felt that a call for evidence would be most beneficial directly after the February 2008 Report was issued and in time to inform the June 2008 Report.
17. The secretariat said it would work up some suggestions for questions that would make up the call for evidence.

### **Agenda Item 4 – Stakeholders and Media**

#### Stakeholder and Media Engagement (Paper 1.5)

18. The secretariat introduced a paper that suggested ways to approach stakeholder engagement, including suggestions as to the membership of the stakeholder panel.

19. After discussion, the Committee concluded that it would like to keep the stakeholder panel small in order for it to consider in detail some specific questions, but that this would run alongside a larger, more inclusive forum of stakeholders meeting once or twice a year to be updated on the work of the Committee, and that this larger group would not have a fixed membership.
20. The secretariat informed members that the Committee now had a web presence at [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/mac](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/mac) which would be expanded over the coming weeks and months.
21. Dr Diane Coyle, gave a short talk on communication issues.

### **Agenda Item 5 – Date of, and Agenda for, Next Meeting**

22. Dates for future meetings had already been circulated to members. They were:

Friday 25 January 2008  
Friday 15 February  
Friday 28 March (in Scotland)  
Friday 30 May  
Friday 20 June

23. The Chair said that venues were still to be arranged but that all would start at 10am and would generally be for half a day. However, he requested that members keep the afternoons free in case further discussion was required.
24. The Secretary ran through the probable agenda for the next meeting which would be:
  - more detailed draft outlines for January and February Reports;
  - proposals for how occupation lists would be updated after June 2008;
  - proposals for how we will produce a shortage list for Scotland;
  - research – update on short term projects, proposals for long-term projects; and
  - regional visits (where, sectors to visit, who to meet, liaise with RDs, involve local media).

### **Agenda Item 6 – Any Other Business**

25. There were no items of any other business.

**MAC Secretariat  
December 2007**