

## **Minutes of the 60th meeting of the Migration Advisory Committee on 13 December 2013**

**Chair:** Professor Sir David Metcalf CBE

**Attending:** Dr Martin Ruhs  
Dr Jennifer Smith  
Professor Jonathan Wadsworth  
Professor Jackline Wahba  
John Thompson (Home Office)  
MAC Secretariat

**Apologies:** Lesley Giles

### **Agenda item 1 - Welcome and introductions**

1. There were apologies from Lesley Giles. The Committee expressed its recognition and thanks for the service in the MAC secretariat of Margaret McGrath, who is retiring, and Emily Eisenstein, who is soon going on maternity leave.

### **Agenda item 2 – Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2013**

2. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

### **Agenda item 3 – Home Office and MAC secretariat policy updates – oral item**

3. John Thompson gave an update on behalf of the Home Office (HO). John reported that the recent net migration figures showed that HO policies were having the effect of generating more of the sought after types of migrant. There was a slight rise in the overall net figure. The HO focus would now be on reducing abuse of the system and looking more closely at sponsorship of migrants as well as the exceptional talent route. In response to John's update, the Chair of the MAC asked a question about the post-study work route and Martin Ruhs asked about EU posted workers. In response to the latter, John said that he would let the MAC secretariat have some briefing on this to share with the Committee.
4. Tim Harrison gave the update on behalf of the MAC secretariat. He said that he would shortly be meeting with the HO, together with the Chair of the Committee, to discuss potential future work for the Committee, with the final decision being for Ministers. Tim reported on his recent visit to Washington DC where he had met with some US policy and academic colleagues in relation to the two current MAC commissions on migrant investors and low skilled migrant workers. He also spoke at a major immigration conference on family migration.

5. The Chair invited Committee members to give an update on their recent activity. Jackline Wahba said that she had attended the Committee's visit to Southampton including a visit to employers and a public forum event in relation to the MAC's low skilled commission. She reported she had found the visit very useful and informative. Jackline undertook to provide the secretariat with some relevant papers produced by the Centre for Population Change.
6. The Committee then heard from the Chair about his recent visit to Wisbech to see operations aimed at those exploiting migrant workers and to meet with representatives from Fenland District Council. The Chair said that this visit would be discussed in the sections of the MAC report on low-skill migration that looked at enforcement. The Chair then reported back on his appearance before the Home Affairs Select Committee on 10 December.

**Agenda item 4 – Paper 60.1: Update on the economic impact of the Tier 1 (Investor) route and draft report (as annex)**

7. Adrian Duffy presented the paper on investors focussing on engagement meetings. The Committee reviewed the initial draft chapters of the report and offered comments. The Committee was keen to ensure a clear focus on whether the outcomes of this route were consistent with its original aims. In particular the Committee stressed the need to bear in mind the counterfactual when assessing the benefits to the UK identified by the Tier 1 Investor route.
8. In relation to investor thresholds, the Committee noted that these had not been increased since the 1990s. The Committee considered why investors chose to come to the UK and asked to see what international competitors do. The Committee considered the pros and cons of some potential broad policy options..
9. The Committee concluded that it would like to see a rehearsal of various options in the final report but would like to see the discussion reversed so that options were discussed before the mechanisms that could be used to effect, rather than as in the present draft.

**Agenda item 5 – Paper 60.2: Update on the review of migrant employment in low-skilled work**

10. Emily Eisenstein introduced this paper and highlighted some up and coming partner engagements. Committee members expressed an interest to participate in the MAC's continuing programme of partner visits. Vanna Aldin updated the Committee on the research projects and the potential arrangements for academic workshops to discuss and bring together relevant research on some key issues for the low skilled commission.

**Agenda item 6 – Any other business**

11. The meeting discussed recent communications received about adding new, or amended, questions to the Labour Force Survey and Committee members were invited to inform the secretariat if they had suggestions for this.
12. The meeting also heard that the Office for National Statistics was conducting a consultation on how to carry out a national census in the future, with the option of continuing an in-depth census online every ten years or having a smaller survey every year supplementing existing administrative sources of information. The Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this and fed into a formal response from the MAC to the consultation..
13. Jennifer Smith said that Warwick University was considering arranging a conference on migration sometime after the MAC completes its low-skill migration report. The Committee said that around June would be a good time to do this and that it would present a potentially appropriate occasion at which to present the findings from the MAC commissioned research.

#### **MAC secretariat**

**December 2013**