**Invitation to join Celtic Freeport Company Limited skills working group**

***Skills Working Group members sought to support the development of skills in the Celtic Freeport’s target sectors***

Celtic Freeport Company Limited (CFCL or the Celtic Freeport) is seeking members for a dedicated Freeport Skills Group (The Skills Group). The Skills Group will ensure the outputs of the Celtic Freeport lead to improved opportunities for local people and employers.

The Skills Group requires representation from a broad range of skills experts, sector-leading employers, skills delivery agents and advocates of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds from across South and West Wales. Members of the Skills Group will partake in meetings that will produce advisory policy on skills for the consideration for the CFCL board, this policy will shape the skills environment of our region for the foreseeable future.

This is an opportunity for those with expert knowledge in skills delivery and in specialties relating to the Celtic Freeport’s target sectors as well as prospective employers of all sizes in those target sectors

The Celtic Freeport was chosen by both the Welsh and UK governments to become one of two freeports in Wales. The bid was submitted by the Celtic Freeport consortium made up of Pembrokeshire County Council, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Associated British Ports and the Port of Milford Haven, the Founding Members. The Celtic Freeport will bring significant benefits to its immediate region, wider South Wales and Wales and the UK as a whole. Freeport incentives include non-domestic rates and national insurance relief on tax site land and customs benefits for customs sites, interventions that are designed to drive investment and growth across the target sectors on floating offshore wind, hydrogen, advanced manufacturing and sustainable fuels, supporting over 16,000 jobs.

**Freeports and Skills**

The Welsh and UK Governments see freeports as forming a key part of the skills ecosystem and require a detailed skills plan to be developed as part of the business case process. Celtic Freeport has submitted its Outline Business Case (OBC). The OBC is expected to be approved in spring 2024. The Full Business Case (FBC) will be developed concurrently with the final phase of the OBC approval with submission anticipated in summer 2024. The OBC and FBC guidelines on skills in included at Appendix 1 of this document.

Celtic Freeport wishes that its Skills Group is fully involved in the development of the FBC skills plan ahead of the plan being approved by the Celtic Freeport board as part of the approval of the FBC.

The Skills Group will support the development and delivery of the skills plan through a number of different initiatives which is anticipated to include:

* Working closely with our stakeholders including private sector partners, universities, colleges, schools, social partners and the Welsh Government
* Promoting and supporting collaboration between local stakeholder and industry on the development of a local skills base
* Developing the skills proposition of the Celtic Freeport as the Freeport matures, with particular focusses on floating offshore wind manufacture and maintenance, hydrogen production/ utilisation
* Establishment of skills centres of excellence
* Outreach to underserved communities
* Provide technical and expert advice to the Celtic Freeport Board with respect to skills
* Advise how the Celtic Freeport will build on/ amplify/ complement, etc, existing skills programmes and the local skills ecosystem
* Consider areas of cross-over to other work-streams such as Fair Work and Innovation.

Celtic Freeport, through its fulltime resourcing, anticipates providing secretariat support to the Skills Group.

**Application process**

Those interested in applying to join the Celtic Freeport skills group should fill in an Expression of Interest form which is available to download at <https://www.celticfreeport.wales/celtic-freeport-seeks-specialist-innovation-and-skills-input-to-deliver-green-investment-vision/> and include a covering letter of no more than two pages indicating their expertise for the role. The application processor the Skills Group opens on the 8th February 2024 and closes at midnight of the 28th February 2024..

The Founding Members of the Celtic Freeport will assess all applications and it is intended that candidates will be informed of the outcome of their application by the end of February 2024. The Skills Group is anticipated to hold its initial meeting in March 2024.

At its initial meeting, the Skills Group will elect a Chair and adopt its Terms of Reference.

If this role is of interest to you please visit <https://www.celticfreeport.wales/celtic-freeport-seeks-specialist-innovation-and-skills-input-to-deliver-green-investment-vision/> to find out more or download an expression of interest form. For an informal conversation about this role please contact the interim Celtic Freeport Skills lead Ieuan.rees@pembrokeshire.gov.uk or David Gwynne, Interim CEO of the Celtic Freeport david.gwynne@eurusconsulting.com

Appendix 1

Freeport OBC and FBC guidance

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| **1ci8. Skills and Fair Work**Update OBC content if the position has changed materially and provide a detailed skills plan at **Annex L**. Further guidance on this plan may be obtained from the Hub.The detailed skills plan should exemplify progressive best practice and include:* an analysis of the local labour market and any skills gaps (this should read across to Section 1b above) by working with the national skills agencies to access the required skills planning data. In addition to understanding current challenges, the Freeport should be thinking about future skills provision including how skills may need to adapt or change to support the just transition to net zero;
* a summary of existing skills provision in the Freeport area and how it might address the identified gaps; national skills agencies can assist with information;
* a plan for engaging, and encouraging employers to engage, with local and national skills stakeholders, including colleges and skills providers and DWP;
* a plan for providing relevant training opportunities, including by using and contributing to national training programmes;
* a plan for encouraging/incentivising employers to provide fair employment and progression opportunities to improve equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes;
* a summary of the skills initiatives the Freeport will fund/deliver and a clear commitment to investing in the upskilling/retraining of the workforce; and
* a plan for the Freeport accessing existing skills funding and aligning with relevant local and national strategies.
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