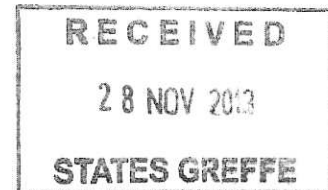


27th November 2013



Dear Mr Oldham

Re: Scrutiny Call for Evidence - Digital Skills

The Skills Board welcomes the work that both *Digital Jersey* and the *Department for Education, Sport and Culture* are doing to improve the digital skills of young people. The concerns we have centre on the digital strategy to improve the skills within the rest of the island population.¹

Extracts from Digital Jersey's (DJL) Business Plan, published 10th October 2013:

Objectives

Digital Jersey has three primary objectives:

1. *To support sustainable economic growth in Jersey's digital industry, as measured by sector contribution to gross value added (GVA), job creation and the number and sustainability of digital businesses.*
2. *To enable a connected, digital society and enhanced quality of life in Jersey, as measured by an increased provision of online services by government, changes in the education curriculum, improved skills and awareness in the general population, and the development of essential 'digital' infrastructure.*
3. *To establish Jersey as an internationally well-regarded 'digital centre', as measured by ranking in key indices, recognition in target media and online statistics, the results of industry surveys, and sector-specific inward investment.²*

The Skills Board has followed with interest, the second objective which centres on the "connected, digital society" and "improved skills and awareness in the general population."³

¹ The 2011 Jersey Census recorded 19,515 0-18 year olds and 78,342 people aged 19 or older. See: States of Jersey Statistics Unit, *Report on the 2011 Jersey Census*, Appendix C – Data Tables: Table A2, p.58-59

² Digital Jersey, *Developing a Digital Jersey: October 2013*, p. 1

Our observations are that there is no evidence in the Digital Jersey Business Plan (or to date) of how Digital Jersey plans to tackle this crucial area. The Education & Skills "Technical Action Group" (TAG) established by Digital Jersey to cover this objective has devoted most of its time focussing on the digital skills of young people (a very important and significant target group). At present there doesn't appear to be a clear, coherent and strategic action plan that will enable Digital Jersey to meet, in full, its second objective as outlined above.

We note that on page 6 of their business plan DJL state:

Digital Jersey recognises that developing a broader set of social objectives is required to measure progress towards a digitally enabled and connected society. These objectives are more challenging to cast in a SMART format, but will be developed as this plan evolves.⁴

The Skills Board wish to stress the sense of urgency surrounding Objective 2 and await with interest Digital Jersey's detailed plan that will enable *all members* of Jersey's society to benefit from digital technologies.

Yours sincerely,

David Witherington
Chairman – Jersey Skills Board

³ Ibid, p.1

⁴ Ibid, p.6