
Minutes of the 120th meeting of the Council held 7 December 2007 in the Council Chambers, Cardiff University

Present:

Members: Dr Geoffrey Thomas (Acting Chair)
Dr Len Arthur
Professor Philip Gummett (Chief Executive)
Professor Garel Rhys
Mr Ken Richards
Professor Sir Brian Smith
Mrs Tina Stephens
Mrs Pauline Thomas

Observers: Dr David Bacon, Welsh Assembly Government
Dr John Selby, Head of Widening Participation, HEFCE

Officers: Dr David Blaney
Mr Roger Carter
Mr Dale Hall
Ms Niina Hammond
Mr Richard Hirst
Ms Celia Hunt
Mrs Bethan Owen
Ms Emma Raczka

Apologies: were received from Professor Sir Roger Williams (Chairman), Professor Mari Lloyd-Williams, Mr Tim Rees and Professor Nigel Stott.

- 1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
 - 1.1 Council noted the absence, due to illness, of the Chair Professor Sir Roger Williams and the chairing of the meeting via delegated authority by Dr Geoffrey Thomas.
 - 1.2 Resolved to forward best wishes to Professor Sir Roger Williams.
 - 1.3 Council noted that the alternative meeting venue was due to building refurbishment being carried out in the HEFCW offices, Llanishen.
 - 1.4 The following standing members interests were declared in relation to agenda item 5 ('Reconfiguration and Collaboration' HEFCW/07/99):

- Dr Len Arthur as a member of staff at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, including involvement for UWIC in the pan-Wales expression of interest in developing a Wales Regeneration Network and in the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Data and Methods.
- Professor Philip Gummett whose partner is employed at the Swansea Institute of Higher Education.
- Mr Kenneth Richards as a Member of University of Wales, Aberystwyth Investments Committee.
- Professor Sir Brian Smith as international ambassador for Cardiff University.
- Dr Geoffrey Thomas as an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College Carmarthen.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2007
(HEFCW/07/MIN119)

Resolved: that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 18 October 2007.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the meeting held 18 October 2007 not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT (HEFCW/07/CE7)

4.1 Advertisement for Council Chair

Council received an Oral update on Welsh Assembly Government recruitment of the new Council Chair. Noted that the new Chair would be remunerated for two more days work per Calendar month (making 6 in total), reflecting more complete recognition of the role.

4.2 HEW/CHEW/HEFCW Strategic Dialogue meetings 2008

Resolved:

- i) to note that the dates and locations of the 2008 HEW/CHEW/HEFCW Strategic Dialogue meetings would be 7 March 2008 at Swansea Institute of Higher Education and 4 and 5 September 2008 at Swansea University;
- ii) to receive draft notes of the Strategic Development meeting 6 and 7 September 2007 at Bangor University.

4.3 Institutional Visit: University of Glamorgan

Council received and considered details of the Institutional Visit to the University of Glamorgan on 31 January 2008.

Resolved:

- i) to note the details of the Visit and tour;
- ii) to approve the proposed discussion agenda.

4.4 Assembly Draft Budget

Council considered contents of the Assembly Draft Budget as published on 5 November 2007.

Resolved:

- i) to note officers' initial analysis of the Assembly Draft Budget which was published on 5 November 2007;
- ii) to note that the Assembly's Strategic Capital Investment Board would provide further funding that could be bid for for HE purposes, but that the bidding process was to be clarified;
- iii) that a Ministerial response to the Council's work on the Comparative Funding Gap submitted on 26 September 2007 had not yet been received;
- iv) that the Clerk would liaise with the HE Division to confirm a 2008 Council meeting which the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills would attend.

4.5 Supplementary Capital Funding Allocation

Council received proposals for an increase in the 2007-08 Supplementary Capital Funding Allocations.

Resolved:

This paragraph is exempt from disclosure under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as it contains information intended for future publication.

4.6 UKHEAC

Council received an update on the developments arising from the recent UKHEAC meeting on 14 November 2007.

Resolved:

- i) to note matters raised at the recent UKHEAC meeting;
- ii) to endorse the proposal that Assembly officials should again be encouraged to establish a high level dialogue between the Council, the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and the NHS Wales.

4.7 EPSRC Science and Innovation Awards

Council received and considered a proposal for funding of a 2007 Science and Innovation Award at Cardiff University.

Resolved: to agree to contribute £100k towards the cost of the 2007 Science and Innovation award.

4.8 UK Review of the Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme

Council received and considered the proposal for a contribution to the UK-wide ORSAS scheme.

Resolved: to approve the budget for the Council contribution to the UK-wide ORSAS review, which was expected to be around £2.5k

4.9 Longitudinal study of destinations of leavers from HE

Council received and considered a study of destination of leavers from HE.

Resolved:

- i) to note the expenditure on the first longitudinal survey run in 2006/07;
- ii) to agree to providing funding of £56,300 for the 2008/09 survey.

4.10 Evaluation of Science Research Investment Fund (Round Two)

Resolved: to agree to contribute up to £2.25k in 2007/08 for the UK-wide evaluation of the Science Research Investment Fund (Round Two).

4.11 Meetings with Heads of HEIs held 18 and 19 October 2007

Resolved: to note the summary of the October 2007 meetings held with Heads of HEIs.

4.12 Research Sounding Group

Council noted an update on membership of the Research Sounding Group.

Resolved: to note that the updated membership would require the approval of the Appointments Committee.

4.13 Appointments Committee update

Resolved: to note the Appointments Committee activity since the last Council meeting held 18 October 2007.

4.14 ITT Accreditation: Aberystwyth University

Resolved: to note the recent developments within ITT provision at Aberystwyth University.

4.15 Sector Procurement – Strategic Development Fund

Council received and considered a tabled item detailing a proposal to provide further funding for the Higher Education Purchasing Consortium Wales' Procurement Manager post.

Resolved: to agree to provide further funding from the Strategic Development Fund to the Higher Education Purchasing Consortium Wales for two years, 2008/09 and 2009/10, at £65k a year.

4.16 Reaching Wider Initiative

Council received and considered proposals for extension funding for All-Wales Reaching Wider activities.

Resolved: to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve an additional allocation, up to a maximum of £180k from the Reaching Wider budget line, for the e-mentoring RW All-Wales Activities, subject to the submission of satisfactory reports and the Reaching Wider Partnerships' 'buy-in'.

4.17 Inquiry into the Economic Contribution of Higher Education by the National Assembly for Wales' Enterprise and Learning Committee

Council received officers' initial written submission on the issues under discussion by the Committee, and that the Chief Executive and Head of Economic Development had appeared to give evidence to the Committee on 5 December 2007. It was noted that it was possible that HEFCW would be invited to reappear before the Committee to give further evidence.

Resolved: that a link to the Committee document on the Assembly website be included in the next Council Newsletter.

4.18 Organisational Design

Council received and considered an oral update on the Organisational Redesign of HEFCW.

Resolved: that Council members be provided the opportunity for clarification by the Chief Executive on the latest developments in the Organisational Design should any so wish.

4.19 Data Security

Council received an oral report following a recent review of data security arrangements.

Resolved: to note that current arrangements were deemed overall satisfactory, but that some areas had been identified for strengthened security arrangements.

4.20 Welsh Assembly Government HE Division

Council received an oral update on the reorganisation of the Assembly Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills as of 1 April 2008.

Resolved: to circulate a copy of the new HE Division structure to Council members.

5. RECONFIGURATION AND COLLABORATION (HEFCW/07/99)

- 5.1 Dr Len Arthur reiterated the declaration that he is employed as a member of staff at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, including involvement for UWIC in the pan-Wales expression of interest in developing a Wales Regeneration Network and in the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Data and Methods. The Chief Executive reiterated the declaration that his partner is employed at the Swansea Institute of Higher Education.

- 5.2 Council received and noted progress with reconfiguration and collaboration since its last meeting on 18 October 2007.

Council noted:

- 5.3 the predicted end-of-year balance for 2007-08, to be carried forward, subject to confirmation from the Welsh Assembly Government;
- 5.4 the level of forecast expenditure and budget for 2008-09;
- 5.5 that the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Panel, at a future meeting, would be considering the introduction of an annual overview document detailing what had been learned from reconfiguration and collaboration projects during that year.

Resolved:

- 5.6 to note the position on funding;
- 5.7 to note the progress of ongoing partnerships;
- 5.8 to note the position of proposed partnerships.

6. OPERATIONAL PLAN 2008-09 (HEFCW/07/100)

- 6.1 Council received and considered the draft Operational Plan 2008-09.

Council noted:

- 6.2 proposed actions for inclusion in the next Operational Plan 2008-09;
- 6.3 that the 2008-09 Remit Letter had yet to be received;
- 6.4 that discussions were ongoing with the Assembly about the process for reviewing higher education strategy in the light of One Wales and therefore that discussions about a revised Corporate Strategy for HEFCW would need to be revisited as these discussions progressed.

Resolved:

- 6.5 to continue to develop as far as possible the draft Operational Plan 2008-09 and to re-present to Council once the 2008-09 Remit Letter had been received.

7. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REVIEW (HEFCW/07/101)

- 7.1 Council received and considered the annual review of its corporate governance arrangements, including proposed revisions to a number of key documents.

Council noted:

- 7.2 the completed assessment against the corporate governance checklist, including members' feedback on a number of specific issues;
- 7.3 a number of aspects which would require revisiting at the next Members' workshop (May 2008);
- 7.4 that the Welsh Assembly Government would welcome suggestions on the improvement of its member induction process;
- 7.5 a number proposed amendments to the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation.

Resolved:

- 7.6 to approve proposed amendments to the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation;
- 7.7 to consider a further revision to the Standing Orders to set out formal coverage in the absence of the Chair when he/she is unavailable to delegate authority to another Member.

8. IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE: REPORT TO THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT (HEFCW/07/102)

- 8.1 Council received and considered a draft report to the Assembly in response to the Remit Letter requirement to review governor and management development and training at Welsh HEIs.

Council noted:

- 8.2 a summary of current governor induction and training arrangements;
- 8.3 recent developments, including the appointment of Dr Heather Graham as Associate Director of the Leadership Foundation for Wales;
- 8.4 that performance issues regarding institutions' governance are picked up via means such as the Annual Assurance Statement to the Assembly, and the annual audit returns from institutions.

Resolved:

- 8.5 to approve the final report for submission to the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.

9. FINANCIAL YEAR BUDGET: Q2 (HEFCW/07/103)

- 9.1 Council received and noted the financial monitoring on programme and running costs expenditure for the period April to September 2007 (Quarter two).

Council noted:

- 9.2 the financial year end position for 2007-08;

The following paragraphs are exempt from disclosure under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as they contain information intended for future publication.

9.3 to 9.5.

10. IMPACT OF FLEXIBLE FEES: ADVICE TO THE MINISTER (HEFCW/07/104)

- 10.1 Council received and considered the draft letter to the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills on the impact of flexible fees and fee plans on Widening Access.

Council noted:

- 10.2 a progress report on the further development of the widening access area;
- 10.3 the recognition of Cardiff University's work with care leavers;
- 10.4 that a qualitative HEW investigation into applicants' views of the Welsh HE sector was due for completion in March 2008.

Resolved:

- 10.5 that 2007 UCAS data would be collected and Council further updated on trends;
- 10.6 to note the UK and Wales data, findings and early conclusions on the impact of the introduction of flexible fees and fee plans.
- 10.7 to note the possible implications for widening access of the introduction of flexible fees and fee plans;
- 10.8 to delegate authority to the Chair and Chief Executive to submit the final advice to the Minister.

11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT (HEFCW/07/105)

- 11.1 Council received and considered the draft Council Equality and Diversity Report 2006/07.

Council noted:

- 11.2 HEFCW's responsibilities regarding institutions' equality and diversity monitoring;
- 11.3 that findings of the access audit of Linden Court should be reported to the HR sub-committee.

Resolved:

- 11.4 to note the outcomes of the 2006-07 Disability, Gender and Race Equality Action Plans and outcomes;
- 11.5 to note the summaries of monitoring data and issues to be addressed;
- 11.6 to note the Chief Executive's decision to agree funding up to £5k for the disability baseline provision evaluation;
- 11.7 to approve the building of costs of the DES Evaluation funding into the 2008/09 budget;
- 11.8 to delegate authority to the Chair and Chief Executive to finalise the Equality and Diversity Report 2006/07 for publication.

12. ITT ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES (HEFCW/07/106)

- 12.1 Council received and considered revised procedures for the accreditation of ITT providers.

Council noted:

- 12.2 procedures for the accreditation of new ITT providers;
- 12.3 the procedures for confirming compliance in existing ITT providers;
- 12.4 the process for addressing non-compliance and the withdrawal of accreditation.

Resolved:

- 12.5 to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve the draft procedures for consultation with the sector.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 Annual Public Meeting

Council noted:

- i) the good turnout to the Annual Public Meeting held 5 December 2007 in Cardiff and thanks to Communications Manager for organising;
- ii) that Swansea was being considered as a venue for the next Annual Public Meeting, the date would be confirmed.

Resolved: to circulate a list of attendees to members.

13.2 Chair

Council noted its thanks to Dr Geoffrey Thomas for chairing the meeting of Council.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Council noted the date of the next meeting as 1 February 2008 to be held at HEFCW offices, Llanishen, Cardiff.

15. WIDENING ACCESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 16 OCTOBER 2007 (HEFCW/07/107)

15.1 Council received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Widening Access Committee held 16 October 2007.

15.2 Resolved: to approve, subject to confirmation by the Committee, the minutes of the meeting of the Widening Access Committee held 16 October 2007.

16. AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 12 OCTOBER 2007 (HEFCW/07/108)

16.1 Council received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held 12 October 2007.

16.2 Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held 12 October 2007.

17. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER (HEFCW/07/109)

17.1 Council received and noted the latest Corporate Risk Register as reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 12 October 2007.

- 17.2 Resolved: to approve the latest Corporate Risk Register.
18. ANNUAL REPORT AND MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING (LTC) COMMITTEE AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT (QAC) COMMITTEE 5 OCTOBER 2007 (HEFCW/07/110)
- 18.1 Council received and noted the minutes of the meetings of the LTC and QAC held 5 October 2007.
- 18.2 Council received and noted the annual report for 2006/07 of the LTC and QAC.
- Resolved:
- 18.3 to approve, subject to confirmation by the committees, the minutes of the meetings of the LTC and QAC held 5 October 2007.
- 18.4 to note the annual report for 2006/07 of the LTC and QAC.
19. HE ACADEMY FINAL PROGRESS REPORT 2006/07 (HEFCW/07/111)
- 19.1 Council received and noted the HE Academy final progress report 2006/07.
- Resolved:
- 19.2 to note the HE Academy final progress report 2006/07.
- 19.3 to approve HEFCW funding of £861,128 for the Academy in 2007/08.
20. WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME: ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORT (HEFCW/07/112)
- 20.1 Council received and noted the Welsh Language Scheme Annual Compliance Report and the feedback on the report by the Welsh Language Board.
- 20.2 Council also noted the exercise of delegated authority by the Chief Executive in submitting the report to the Board.
- 20.3 Resolved: to note the Welsh Language Scheme Annual Compliance Report, the exercise of delegated authority in submitting the report to the Welsh Language Board, and the feedback report provided by the Board.
21. HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) MINUTES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 11 OCTOBER 2007 (HEFCW/07/113)

- 21.1 Council received and noted the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held 11 October 2007.
- 21.2 Resolved: to note the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held 11 October 2007.

Signature.....Date.....