
Minutes of the 125th meeting of the Council held 26 September 2008 in HEFCW Offices, Llanishen.

Present:

Members: Mr Roger Thomas (Chairman)
Professor Philip Gummett (Chief Executive)
Mr Tim Rees
Mr Ken Richards
Professor Sir Brian Smith
Mrs Tina Stephens
Dr Geoffrey Thomas
Mrs Pauline Thomas

Observers: Mr Mike Hopkins, Welsh Assembly Government
Mr Christopher Millward, Associate Director, North, HEFCE

Officers: Dr David Blaney
Mr Roger Carter
Mr Ben Craft (an observer)
Ms Niina Hammond
Mr Neil Hempstead (an observer)
Mr Richard Hirst
Ms Celia Hunt
Ms Bethan Owen

Apologies: were received from Dr Len Arthur, Professor Mari Lloyd-Williams, Professor Garel Rhys and Professor Nigel Stott.

1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Council noted:

1.1 An update on Professor Nigel Stott's health following a recent visit by Dr Geoffrey Thomas.

1.2 The following standing members' interests were declared in relation to agenda item 11 (Reconfiguration and Collaboration HEFCW/08/60):

- Professor Philip Gummett whose partner is employed at Swansea Metropolitan University.
- Dr Geoffrey Thomas as an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College Carmarthen.

- Mr Tim Rees as Honorary Doctor of the University of Glamorgan.
- Mr Ken Richards as a Member of Aberystwyth University Investments Committee.
- Professor Sir Brian Smith as International Ambassador for Cardiff University.
- Mr Roger Thomas as a former Chair of the University of Glamorgan, member of the Steering Group for Governing Bodies and Equality Project, Equality Challenge Unit and Honorary Doctor of the University of Glamorgan.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 JULY 2008 (HEFCW/08/MIN124)

Resolved: that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 4 July 2008 subject to the following amendment:

to remove the Freedom of Information exemptions from Minute 5.4 (formulation of Welsh Assembly Government policy) and 6.2 to 6.8 (commercially sensitive information).

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Council received and considered a report on action taken following the previous Council meeting held 4 July 2008.

3.2 Resolved:

- i) to note that deliberations held at Swansea University on 4 September 2008 had been circulated to Council separately;
- ii) that an update on item 7.4 - distribution of the recurrent grant for 2008/09 had been detailed in the Chief Executive's Report;
- iii) that officers were liaising with Welsh Assembly Government officials over their ongoing review of Applied Education Research requirements;
- iv) to note the contents of the report.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

4.1 Council received an oral report from the Chair on activity since the last meeting of Council, including the Task and Finish Group, and his meeting (with the chief executive) with the Permanent Secretary

4.2 Resolved:

- i) to note that the review of HEFCW's committee structure would be brought back to Council at the December 2008 meeting;

- ii) to note attendance by at the October meetings by the heads of Aberystwyth University and Trinity College, Carmarthen on 23 October 2008, to be followed by Cardiff University and Swansea Metropolitan University on 24 October;
- iii) to note that a briefing session on the RAE would be held for Members on 12 January 2009 to inform the discussions to be held at the Council meeting on 30 January 2009;

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT (HEFCW/08/CE5)

5.1 Review of HEW/CHEW/HEFCW Strategic Dialogue, 4 and 5 September 2008

Council considered the HEW/CHEW/HEFCW Strategic Dialogue meeting held 4 and 5 September 2008 at Swansea University.

Resolved: to note that a summary on the HEW/CHEW/HEFCW Strategic Dialogue meeting held September 2008 would be distributed to Council when available.

5.2 ITT reconfiguration: Update

Council received and considered the Welsh Assembly Government's response to the Council's progress report on ITT reconfiguration and a copy of the Council's standard covering letter to ITT providers.

Resolved: to note that there were some outstanding issues but that officers would be meeting with ITT providers and remained confident of future progress on ITT reconfiguration.

5.3 Swansea second campus

Council received and noted an oral progress report on the active investigations being carried out into a second campus at Swansea University.

5.4 University of Wales activities

Council received and noted an oral update on recent University of Wales activities.

5.5 GO Wales update

Council received and approved a tabled request to provide contingency funding during calendar year 2009 to enable HEIs to retain GO Wales

staffing/activities at present levels. These funds would only be required in the case of a further delay in confirmation of WEFO funding allocations for the next phase of GO Wales (which was due to start on 1 January 2009).

Resolved: to confirm the allocation, if needed, of a further £800,000 to GO Wales for 2009.

5.6 Study on Cost Weightings for Research

Council received and considered an invitation to participate with other UK Funding Councils in funding a study to inform revisions to research funding methods which will be required following the introduction of the proposed new metrics-based approach to research assessment after the 2008 RAE.

Resolved: to approve a contribution of £3k for a UK-wide study on subject cost relativities in research.

5.7 QAA funding for 2008/09

Council received and approved the costs for the QAA in 2008/09 for meeting the activities set out in the Service Level Agreement.

Resolved: to approve the cost of £214,329 for the QAA in 2008/09.

5.8 Higher Education Academy funding for 2008/09

Council received and approved a proposal to fund the Higher Education (HE) Academy in 2008/09 and an estimate for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Resolved: to approve HE Academy funding from HEFCW of £884,809 for 2008/09, and in principle a similar sum plus GDP for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

5.9 Open University Capital 2008/09

Council received an update on discussions held between officers, Welsh Assembly Government officials and the Open University in Wales to clarify the Open University in Wales' allocation for teaching, capital and ITT for 2008/09 onward.

Resolved: to approve the use of Open University ITT and contingency funds to support the Open University in Wales capital funding in 2008/09.

5.10 Bangor University Institutional Visit 3 July 2008 notes

Council received the note of the Institutional Visit to Bangor University on 3 July 2008.

Resolved: to note the note of the Institutional Visit to Bangor University on 3 July 2008.

5.11 Use of the Chief Executive's Miscellaneous budget line

Council received details of the use of the Chief Executive Miscellaneous Fund, in 2007/08.

Resolved: to note the use of the Chief Executive Miscellaneous Fund under delegated authority in 2007/08.

5.12 Burgess funding

Council received an update on proposed UK-wide Higher Education Academy work following the Burgess Group recommendations.

Resolved: to note the use of delegated powers by the Chief Executive to confirm the Council's contribution of approximately £30,000 for the development of recommendations of the Burgess Group on '*Beyond the degree classification*'.

5.13 New Chair of the Joint Information Services Committee (JISC)

Council noted the new Chair of the Joint Information Services Committee from 1 January 2009, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea.

5.14 Exercise of Delegated Authority

Council received an update on the exercise of delegated authority.

Resolved:

- i) to note the exercise of delegated authority by the Chief Executive in finalising the HEFCW Equality Scheme;
- ii) to note the exercise of delegated authority by the Chair and Chief Executive in agreeing a statement to accompany the publication of the HEFCW Stakeholders' Survey.
- iii) to note the Chief Executive's exercise of delegated authority in submitting the Corporate and Operational Plan 2008-11 to the Welsh Assembly Government on 18 July 2008.

The paragraphs below are exempt from disclosure under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (information which is commercially sensitive).

iv) and v)

5.15 HEFCW Pay and Grading

Council received and noted details of the HEFCW Pay and Grading arrangements and the Chair of the HR Committee's invitation to speak with members if required.

5.16 Chief Executive's Calendar

Council received and considered a tabled copy of the Chief Executive's Calendar of meetings and events since the last Council meeting held 4 July 2008.

Resolved: to note the Chief Executive's schedule of meetings since the last Council meeting 4 July 2008.

6. REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) IN WALES, TASK AND FINISH GROUP

6.1 Council considered and discussed an oral update on the review of HE in Wales Task and Finish Group aims.

Council noted:

6.2 the two review areas of student finance, reporting to the Minister by the end of September 2008, and the refreshing of Reaching Higher aims;

6.3 ongoing liaison with HEW over the Review.

Resolved:

6.4 to consider the Council's advice to the Group at the meeting of Council to be held 23 October 2008.

7. UNIVERSITY OF WALES, LAMPETER (HEFCW/08/56) ATTENDEES ONLY

7.1 Council received and considered an update on recent developments with the University of Wales, Lampeter.

Council noted:

7.2 the public announcement of Mr Alfred Morris, as interim Vice-Chancellor of University of Wales, Lampeter.

- 7.3 that on 25 September, Council members had held a positive meeting with representatives of the University of Wales, Lampeter governing body, and the Chair and Chief Executive had also met the student president, staffing unions and senior management.

The paragraphs below are exempt from disclosure under sections 41 (information provided in confidence) and 43 (information which is commercially sensitive) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

7.4 to 7.10

8. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OVERSEAS RESEARCH STUDENT AWARDS SCHEME (ORSAS) IN WALES (HEFCW/08/57)
- 8.1 Council considered the future of the Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme in Wales following HEFCE's withdrawal, with effect from October 2009.

Resolved:

- 8.2 to agree that funding for ORSAS in Wales should be phased out from 2009/10;
- 8.3 to agree that the funding released should be transferred to the PGR funding stream.

9. ANNUAL REPORT 2007-08 (HEFCW/07/58)

- 9.1 Council received and considered the draft Annual Report 2007-08.

Council noted:

- 9.2 that the overall Council action plan which would respond to communications issues raised in the Stakeholders Survey, would include the dissemination of the Annual Report;
- 9.3 that new approaches towards the Annual Public meeting were being considered for 2008.

Resolved:

- 9.4 to note the draft 2007-08 Annual Report;
- 9.5 to delegate authority to the Chair and Chief Executive to sign off the final version in October 2008.

10. CONSULTATION ON QAA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW: WALES FROM 2009/10 (HEFCW/08/59)

- 10.1 Council received and considered the HEFCW consultation on the Institutional Review: Wales (IR) process to be used by the QAA in reviewing Welsh Higher Education Institutions from 2009/10.

Council noted:

- 10.2 recent publicity associated with statements by the QAA about quality and standards;

- 10.3 that the Quality Working Group would be considering the outcomes of the consultation in November 2008.

- 10.4 Resolved: that outcomes of the Working Group discussions would be brought to Council's December meeting.

11. RECONFIGURATION AND COLLABORATION (HEFCW/08/60)

- 11.1 The Chief Executive reiterated the declaration that his partner is employed at Swansea Metropolitan University.

- 11.2 Council received and noted progress with reconfiguration and collaboration since its last meeting on 4 July 2008.

Council noted:

The paragraphs below are exempt from disclosure under sections 36 (information potentially prejudicial to the conduct of public affairs) and 43 (information which is commercially sensitive) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

11.3 to 11.9

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 Mr Tim Rees

Resolved: to note Mr Tim Rees' last Council meeting and the Chair's thanks to him for his six years of service as Council member and his work as the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, and as a member of the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Panel, and the HR Committee

12.2 Skills that Work for Wales

Resolved: to note that a presentation on *Skills that Work for Wales* would be given by Mr Mike Hopkins at the Council meeting to be held 30 January 2009.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Council noted:

- i) the date of the next meeting as 23 October 2008, to be held at the HEFCW Offices, Cardiff.
- ii) the agenda items received to date from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to be discussed at her annual session with Council on 23 October 2008 as: the Higher Education Review; Reconfiguration; the University of Wales, Lampeter and the Quinquennial review.

14. WIC REVIEW AND FUNDING POST-2009 (HEFCW/08/61)

14.1 Council received and considered its financial contribution to the Wales International Consortium (WIC) and the key outcomes of the recent review of WIC, commissioned by HEW, and co-funded by HEW and the Council.

14.2 Resolved:

- i) to approve a further three years funding for WIC; specifically £75,450 for each of the years 2009-10 to 2011-12;
- ii) to note the outcomes of the review;
- iii) to endorse the recommendation that: 'any lobbying role for WIC needs to be clearly defined and agreed with HEW and HEFCW';
- iv) to invite the WIC Director/ Board to continue to work closely with the Council and HEW on matters of strategy;
- v) to invite the WIC Director/ Board to consider how it might mitigate against the risks associated with the current over-reliance on the WIC Director.

15. REVISED AUDIT CODE AND FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM (HEFCW/08/62)

15.1 Council received and considered a revised Financial Memorandum between the Council and HEIs and also a revised Audit Code of Practice.

15.2 Resolved:

- i) to approve the key amendments made to the Financial Memorandum and the Audit Code of Practice;
 - vi) to approve the revised Financial Memorandum between HEFCW and HEIs;
 - iii) to approve the revised Audit Code of Practice.
16. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE STATEMENT (HEFCW/08/63)
- 16.1 Council received and considered the draft of the annual assurance statement on the quality of governance in the HE sector.
- 16.2 Resolved: to approve the text of the assurance statement.
17. LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE MINUTES MEETING HELD 27 JUNE 2008 (HEFCW/08/64)
- 17.1 Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee held 27 June 2008.
- 17.2 Resolved: to note the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee held 27 June 2008.
18. ITT ACCREDITATION: ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY AND THE OPEN UNIVERSITY (HEFCW/08/65)
- 18.1 Council received recommendations on Aberystwyth University and the Open University as providers of Initial Teacher Training in Wales.
- 18.2 Resolved:
- i) to confirm the continued accreditation of Aberystwyth University as a provider of Initial Teacher Training in Wales;
 - ii) to confirm the accreditation of the Open University as a provider of Initial Teacher Training in Wales.
19. MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 23 JUNE 2008 (HEFCW/08/66)
- 19.1 Council received the unconfirmed minutes and report of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 23 June 2008.
- 19.2 Resolved: to note the unconfirmed minutes and report of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 23 June 2008.

20 PROGRESS ON THE OPERATIONAL PLAN (HEFCW/08/67)

20.1 Council received the final version of the Corporate Strategy and Corporate Plan and Operational Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11 as approved by the Welsh Assembly Government, and a final update on progress as at the end of 2007-08 against activities in HEFCW's *Operational Plan 2007-08*.

20.2 Resolved:

i) to note the finalised HEFCW's Corporate Strategy and Corporate Plan and Operational Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11,

ii) to note the final outcome of HEFCW's *Operational Plan 2007-08*.

21 HEFCW ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2007-08 (HEFCW/08/68)

21.1 Council received the Annual Accounts and Report for 2007-08.

21.2 Resolved: to note the contents of the Annual Accounts and Report and specifically the unqualified audit certificate and report of the Auditor General for Wales.

22. APRIL 2008 TO JUNE 2008 (Q1) CASH EXPENDITURE REPORT HEFCW FINANCIAL YEAR 2008-09 (HEFCW/08/51)

22.1 Council received the financial monitoring report on programme and running costs expenditure for the period April to June 2008 (Q1 and an update on the financial year end position for 2008-09.

22.2 Resolved: to note the first progress report on actual performance against cash profile for 2008-09 financial year.

23. MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) COMMITTEE MEETING HELD: 14 MAY 2008 (HEFCW/08/70) - MEMBERS ONLY

23.1 Council received the minutes of the meeting of the HR Committee meeting held 14 May 2008 circulated separately.

23.2 Resolved: to note the minutes of the meeting of the HR Committee meeting held 14 May 2008.

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