

Minutes of the 133rd meeting of the Council held 23 October 2009 at HEFCW Offices, Cardiff

Present:

Members: Mr Roger Thomas (Chairman)
Professor Philip Gummett (Chief Executive)
Mr David Allen
Dame Sandra Burslem
Professor Leni Oglesby
Mr Ken Richards
Professor Sir Brian Smith
Professor Mari Lloyd-Williams
Professor Robin Williams

Observers: Ms Katie Dalton, President, National Union of Students in Wales
Dr John Selby, Director (Education and Participation), Higher Education Funding Council for England
Dr Dennis Gunning, Director - Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning Group (DCELLS, Welsh Assembly Government)

Officers: Dr David Blaney
Dr Ewen Brierley (from minute 7)
Mr Roger Carter
Ms Niina Hammond
Mr Richard Hirst
Ms Bethan Owen

Apologies: were received from Professor Garel Rhys and Mrs Pauline Thomas.

1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Council noted:

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Ms Katie Dalton, President, National Union of Students in Wales to her first meeting of HEFCW as an observer.
- 1.2 Members noted that Professor Garel Rhys was unable to attend the meeting on health grounds and wished him a speedy recovery.
- 1.3 The following standing members' interests were declared:

- Mr David Allen as a Board Member of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and a former member of the Equality Challenge Unit Review Group.
- Professor Philip Gummett whose partner is employed at Swansea Metropolitan University.
- 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 former Chair of Governors of the University of Glamorgan and Honorary Doctor of the University of Glamorgan.
- Professor Robin Williams as Emeritus Professor of the University of Wales and Swansea University and Honorary Fellow of Cardiff University, Bangor University and Swansea University.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2009
(HEFCW/09/MIN132)

Resolved: that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 25 September 2009.

3. MATTERS ARISING (HEFCW/09/81)

- 3.1 Council received and noted a report on action taken following the previous Council meeting held 25 September 2009.

Resolved:

- 3.2 to note that no final response had been received to the letter to the University of Wales Vice-Chancellor regarding the University of Wales scholarships but that action was due to be undertaken by the University in the light of the correspondence. Further noted that the matter would be removed from the Matters Arising paper and an update provided to Council when available.
- 3.3 to note that the Annual Report 2008-09 was being published.
- 3.4 to note that members' annual review discussions with the Chair would be arranged to take place before the next Council meeting where possible.
- 3.5 to note the contents of the Matters Arising report.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 4.1 Council received and noted an oral report from the Chair on activity since the last meeting of Council.

4.2 Resolved:

- i) to note that the Chair had attended the first meeting of the external reference group on the 'Manifesto for Change' which had proved a useful meeting.
- ii) to note that the Chair had attended the successful launch of Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE).
- iii) to note that the Chair had attended Cardiff University's Main Building 100th Anniversary Celebration.
- iv) to note that the Chair had attended Bangor University's 125th Anniversary Dinner.
- v) to note an update from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee on its meeting held 8 October 2009 which was attended by new member Grant Hawkins and at which the Risk Register and Analysis of Institutional Financial Health had been the main discussion items.
- vi) to note an update from the deputy Chair of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee on its meeting held 20 October 2009 at which the issues of sectoral research policy; post RAE and economic contribution of HE in Wales had been primary outcomes, A Welsh Assembly Government presentation on HE business interactions had been received and would be provided to all Council members. Further noted the committee's best wishes to its Chair for a speedy recovery.
- vii) to note an update from the Chair of the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality committee on its meeting held 21 October 2009 at which presentations were received on skills and employability. Further noted discussion of the primary issues of foundation degrees, the hidden costs of study and the National Student Survey results. In addition, Council agreed to Wales' participation in the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT (HEFCW/09/CE6)

5.1 Reflections on Institutional Visit to Trinity University College, Carmarthen, 16 October 2009

Council considered the Institutional Visit to Trinity University College, Carmarthen on 16 October 2009.

Resolved:

- i) to note that the Visit had focused on the proposals for the merged New University and had provided positive assurance for members who had been impressed with the overall work completed to date.

5.2 Budget 2010-11

Council received and considered the draft Budget for 2010-11.

The paragraphs below are exempt from disclosure under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (information intended for future publication).

5.i to 5.vi

5.3 Swansea University proposed second campus

Council received and noted an update from the Chief Executive on developments with Swansea University's proposed second campus.

5.4 HEFCW Pay and Grading Review

Council noted its ongoing concern at the continued delay and the lack of progress in finalising the staff pay and grading review. The Welsh Assembly Government assessor apologised for the delay and said that responsibility for it lay with the Welsh Assembly Government.

Resolved:

- i) to note comments by the Welsh Assembly Government assessor and to reiterate its serious concerns and its hope that matters could be brought to a rapid conclusion.

5.5 Reflections on the Council Members' Workshop 22 October 2009 and next steps

Council considered discussions held at the Council Members' Workshop on 22 October 2009 in respect of the emerging Welsh Assembly Government response to the Jones Review of Higher Education and received tabled paper HEFCW/09/CE6 'Manifesto for Change'.

Resolved:

The paragraphs below are exempt from disclosure under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (information intended for future publication).

i) to vi)

5.6 Chief Executive Calendar of Meetings since 25 September 2009

Council received and noted the Chief Executive's Calendar of Meetings held since the last Council meeting.

5.7 Capital Funding 2010/11

Council noted that £5m of capital expenditure was to be brought forward from 2010-11 financial year into this financial year 2009-10.

5.8 Indexation of Research Council Grants

Council noted the effects on the sector of the Research Councils' reduction in the rate of uplift of around 1.2% from April 2010 .

5.9 HEW/CHEW/HEFCW Strategic Dialogue notes 3/4 Sept 2009

Council received and noted the tabled note of the HEW/CHEW/HEFCW Strategic Dialogue meeting held 3 and 4 September 2009.

5.10 Exercise of Delegated Authority

Council noted the Exercise of Delegated Authority by the Chief Executive in approving the use of £19,874 and £20,084 in 2009/10 and 2010/11 respectively for the National Union of Students Wales project on student representation.

6. ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONS' FINANCIAL HEALTH (HEFCW/09/82)
ATTENDEES ONLY

6.1 Council received the report of the financial health of the higher education sector and individual institutions in Wales as indicated by the financial forecasts received in July 2009 for the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2013, and a report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee on primary outcomes following the discussion held at the committee meeting 8 October 2009.

Council noted:

6.2 that the outcomes of the Institutional Risk Review exercise would be reported to Council at its meeting on 12 March 2010. Further noted that this would include consideration of financial risk as part of the review of the overall institutional risk.

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

6.3 to 6.8

7. REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF HEFCW (HEFCW/09/83)

- 7.1 Council noted that the Report of the Governance Review of HEFCW had not yet been received from the Welsh Assembly Government as it was still being drafted.
- 7.2 Resolved: that the Report would be considered by Council when available.

8. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER (HEFCW/09/84)

- 8.1 Council received the latest update of its Corporate Risk Register.

Council noted:

- 8.2 that the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting held 8 October 2009 had recommended use of numerical portrayal of risk since this gave scope for greater discrimination.
- 8.3 current difficulties in management of One Wales agenda funds and the future problems this may cause as funds are required to be allocated more strategically but also within the 2% cash carry forward threshold.

Resolved:

- 8.4 to approve the latest update to the corporate risk register and the distribution of those risks.
- 8.5 to note the commentary on the current distribution of risks and on likely developments in the immediate future.

9. RECONFIGURATION AND COLLABORATION (HEFCW/09/85)

- 9.1 The Chief Executive reiterated the declaration that his partner is employed at Swansea Metropolitan University.
- 9.2 Council received a report of progress on the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund, associated 'One Wales' funding and the Strategic Development Fund since its last meeting on 25 September 2009.

Council noted:

The paragraphs below are exempt from disclosure under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (information intended for future publication).

9.3 to 9.9

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Strategic Plan Feedback (HEFCW/09/101)

Council received and considered tabled draft letters to institutions which provided feedback on their strategic plans or updates submitted in summer 2009.

Resolved: to note the Strategic Plan feedback letters.

10.2 Audit and Risk Committee meeting minutes 8 October 2009

Council received and considered the Audit and Risk Committee meeting minutes 8 October 2009.

Resolved:

- i) to note the unconfirmed minutes and report of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 8 October 2009.
- ii) to approve the updated Internal Audit Service Terms of Reference.

10.3 Council noted that there would be an Institutional Visit to Aberystwyth University on 15 December 2009.

10.4 Council noted that the HEFCW Annual Public Meeting would be held 7 December 2009 in Cardiff and that a further meeting to be held at Aberystwyth University on 15 December 2009 was being investigated.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Council noted the date of the next meeting as 11 December 2009, to be held at HEFCW Offices, Llanishen.

12. REVIEW OF UK HIGHER EDUCATION EUROPE AND INTERNATIONAL UNITS (HEFCW/09/86)

12.1 Council received and considered an update on funding of the UK HE Europe Unit and the UK HE International Unit post July 2010.

Resolved:

12.2 to note all the activity underway to ensure that the UK HE sector was engaged with European and International agendas, and HEFCW and the Welsh sector's full involvement in these processes;

12.3 to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve HEFCW funding contribution to the UK HE Europe and International Units post-2009/10.

13. AMENDMENTS TO APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE (HEFCW/09/87)

13.1 Council received and considered proposals to revise the Appointments Committee Terms of Reference.

13.2 Resolved: to approve revisions to the Appointments Committee Terms of Reference.

14. EQUALITY CHALLENGE UNIT: FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2011-2015 (HEFCW/09/88)

Council member David Allen reiterated the declaration of interest that he was as a former member of the Equality Challenge Unit Review Group.

14.1 Council received and considered funding for a further five years for the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) following an evaluation of the unit and its implications for the promotion of equality and diversity within the HE sector.

14.2 Resolved: to approve the evaluation's recommendations that ECU should be funded for a further five years, from 2011-2016 as per the existing model, with a review of ECU's progress in mainstreaming equality within the sector to be undertaken in 2013.

15. UNIVERSITY OF WALES DICTIONARY: FUNDING FOR 2010/11 (HEFCW/09/89)

15.1 Council received and considered funding arrangements for the University of Wales Dictionary for 2010/11.

Resolved:

15.2 to note that the Dictionary Unit's new business plan would be submitted in October 2010.

15.3 to approve an allocation of £104,000 for the Dictionary Unit for 2010/11.

16. LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF DESTINATIONS OF LEAVERS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION (HEFCW/09/90)

The paragraphs below are exempt from disclosure under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (information intended for future publication).

16.1 and 16.2

17. COUNCIL FORWARD BUSINESS PLAN (HEFCW/09/91)

17.1 Council received the Forward Business Plan for Council meetings to be held December 2009 to March 2010.

17.2 Resolved: to note the Forward Business Plan for the Council meetings to be held December 2009 to March 2010.

18. REDISTRIBUTION OF FUNDED CREDIT VALUES 2009/10 (HEFCW/09/92)

18.1 Council received the outcome of the redistribution of funded credits values exercise for 2009/10.

18.2 Resolved: to note the outcomes of the 2009/10 Redistribution Exercise.

19. PART-TIME UNDERGRADUATE FEE WAIVER SCHEME 2008/09 (HEFCW/09/93)

19.1 Council received the outcomes of the Council's Part-Time Undergraduate Fee Waiver Scheme in 2008/09.

19.2 Resolved: to note the outcomes of the Council's Part-Time Undergraduate Fee Waiver Scheme in 2008/09.

20. QAA HANDBOOK FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW IN WALES FROM 2009/10 (HEFCW/09/94)

20.1 Council received details of the publication of the Handbook for Institutional Review in Wales from 2009/10.

20.2 Resolved: to note the publication of the handbook for Institutional Review: Wales (second edition), to run from 2009/10.

21. OUTCOMES OF 2009 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (HEFCW/09/95)

21.1 Council received the outcomes of the 2009 National Student Survey.

Resolved:

21.2 to note the letter from the Chairman to the Head of UCAS regarding delays in publication of the NSS results, copied to HEFCE and responses received.

- 21.3 to note the results for Wales in the 2009 National Student Survey.
22. HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY REVIEW OF WIDENING ACCESS STRATEGIES AND REACHING WIDER PROPOSALS (HEFCW/09/96)
- 22.1 Council received the key findings of the Higher Education Academy's review of Welsh HEIs' Widening Access strategies and Reaching Wider proposals to be published in late October 2009.
- 22.2 Resolved: to note the Higher Education Academy's review findings, conclusions and recommendations.
23. A PROPOSAL FOR A LEARNED SOCIETY IN WALES (HEFCW/09/98)
- 23.1 Council received details of progress of a proposal which was being progressed under the auspices of the University of Wales to create a Learned Society for Wales.
- 23.2 Resolved: to note the developments of the Learned Society for Wales.
24. OPERATIONAL PLAN 2009/10 (HEFCW/09/99)
- 24.1 Council received an update on progress on the second quarter of 2009-10 against activities in HEFCW's *Operational Plan 2009-10*.
- 24.2 Resolved: to note the second quarter outcome of HEFCW's *Operational Plan 2009-10*.
25. COMMONS WELSH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO CROSS-BORDER SERVICES FOR WALES (HEFCW/09/100)
- 25.1 Council received the evidence submitted to the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Select Committee on 5 October 2009.
- 25.2 Resolved: to note the evidence submitted to the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Select Committee on 5 October 2009.
26. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES ENTERPRISE AND LEARNING COMMITTEE REPORT 'THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN WALES' (HEFCW/09/101)
- 26.1 Council received a summary of the recommendations contained in the report published on 7 October 2009 by the Assembly's Enterprise and Learning Committee on the Economic Contribution of Higher Education in Wales.

26.2 Resolved: to note publication of the Assembly’s Enterprise and Learning Committee Report on the Economic Contribution of Economic Contribution of Higher Education in Wales.

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