

<p>Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru Higher Education Funding Council for Wales</p> 	<p><b>Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee</b></p> <p><b>Disclosable</b></p>
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**Unconfirmed notes of the meeting of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee held on 3 April 2014 at the HEFCW offices, Cardiff**

**Present**

**Members**

Professor Robin Williams (Chair)

Bryn Jones – Chair, Wales HE Industrial Liaison Officers Network (WILOs)

Professor Dylan Jones-Evans – University of West of England

Professor Kevin Morgan - Cardiff University

Sue Morgan – Welsh Government (DEST)

Professor David Shepherd – Bangor University

Professor Stephen Tomlinson – representing HEFCW Council

Simon Bradley – business representative (EADS)

Pauline MacDonald – representing Welsh Heads of Careers Services (WHECS)

Professor Mark E Smith - representing HEFCW Council

Professor Hilary Lappin-Scott - Swansea University

**Attendees**

David Rosser - Welsh Government (DEST)

Dr Nick Bourne – Cardiff University

Roger Thomas – Chair HEFCW Council

**Officers**

Bethan Owen – Head of Institutional Engagement

Dr Tove Oliver – Senior European and International Manager

Dr Alyson Thomas – Head of Research, Innovation & Engagement

Linda Tiller – Senior Research Manager

**Observers**

Jon Waters – Office of the Chief Scientific Advisor for Wales

Amanda Wilkinson – Higher Education Wales (HEW)

**Apologies**

Jackie Cresswell-Griffith – Head of Skills and Employability

Professor Michael Scott – representing HEW

Phil Allen - Welsh Government (DEST)

Peter Quantick – representing Welsh European Liaison Officers (WHEELOs)

Alexandra Saxon – Research Councils UK

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

### *Welcome*

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Professor Hilary Lappin-Scott (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Strategic Development and External Relations, Swansea), and Jon Waters (Office of the Chief Scientific Advisor for Wales) to their first meeting of the Committee.

### *Departing Members*

- 1.2 The following members whose periods of appointment had come to an end were warmly thanked by the Chair for their significant contributions to this Committee:
  - Professor Dylan Jones Evans (appointed 2009)
  - Simon Bradley (appointed 2009)
  - Pauline MacDonald (appointed 2011)
- 1.3 The Chair also thanked Roger Thomas who would be retiring from his role as Chair of HEFCW Council.

## **2. Notes of the Meeting held on 4 October 2013**

- 2.1 The notes of the meeting held on 4 October 2013 were accepted as a true record.

## **3. Matters Arising**

### *a) Item 5: Future of GO Wales*

- 3.1 Dr Oliver updated the Committee on recent discussions with WEFO and DfES (on behalf of Jackie Creswell-Griffith), and the steers being given to GO Wales for a future programme under the new European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). There was considerable support from members for GO Wales in its current form which predominately focusses on supporting and linking graduates to businesses. It was agreed that there would be a need to carefully align GO Wales with programmes such as Jobs Growth Wales, and ensure that any new developments (such as supporting the social agenda) were not at the expense of what is an already a strong and successful brand delivering economic benefit to Wales.

## **4. Communications from the Chair**

### *Meeting with CSAW about Spearhead*

- 4.1 The Chair reported that, in February, HEFCW convened an ad hoc meeting between the Chief Scientific Advisor for Wales (CSAW), Professor Julie Williams, and research-focused members of the Committee in order to discuss plans which CSAW is developing for a successor initiative to Sêr Cymru (Spearhead). A further discussion with this group would follow on from the RIE Committee meeting.

## **5. Fusion IP - *Presentation from Dr Nick Bourne, Cardiff University***

- 5.1 The Chair welcomed Dr Nick Bourne, Deputy Director and Head of Commercial Development at Cardiff University's Research and Innovation and Enterprise Services, who gave a presentation on Fusion IP to provide the Committee with a better understanding of how these agreements work in practice.
- 5.2 Fusion IP works with universities to take intellectual property to the marketplace. In 2007, Cardiff University entered into a ten-year agreement with Fusion IP, giving it the right to commercialise Cardiff's research-generated IP through the creation of spin-out companies. The majority are in biomedical and health sciences. The IP itself is owned by the university and the role of Fusion IP is to provide funding and management support to enable the venture to 'hit the ground running'; by the end of the process it will usually own around 10% of the venture. Cardiff University has a controlling shareholding of Fusion IP, although since merger with IP Group, their share is less.
- 5.3 In 2013, Swansea University entered into a five-year agreement with Fusion IP, which gives Fusion first investment rights from Swansea spin-out companies. Swansea's focus is on creating links through its new campus development, protecting IP and growing business. It is also doing a large amount of work with students and student businesses.
- 5.4 The Committee welcomed the presentation and recognised the need to promote the full breadth of impacts arising from these arrangements, including social enterprise and innovation. It also noted two further activities relating to this agenda including the IP Commercialisation Project IPCoP funded through HEFCW's Innovation and Engagement Fund (I&E), which provides support for the establishment of a network of technology transfer professionals across the research-led universities in Wales. This will feed into the Welsh Government's current review of IP commercialisation models, which aims to recommend options for maximising economic benefit arising from IP. A report on this work will be forthcoming.
- 5.5 Members commented that it was important not to focus exclusively on science and technology transfer, but also to take account of the potential of research to drive social and behavioural change.

## **6 Final report of the subgroup established to consider the outcomes of the Higher Education Business and Communities Interaction (HEBCI) Survey 2011/12**

- 6.1 Dr Thomas introduced the paper which presents the final report of the subgroup established by the Committee to undertake further analysis of the HE-BCI Survey 2011/12. The report includes:
- An overview of HE-BCI outcomes for 2011/12
  - The performance of the Welsh sector relative to the UK

- The performance of Welsh HEIs relative to each other
  - The performance of Welsh HEIs relative to selected comparator groups
  - Conclusions and potential for the future analysis
- 6.2 Dr Thomas noted that the HE-BCI outcomes for 2012/13 are now available and the UK HE Funding Bodies will be meeting soon to discuss these.

6.3 The Committee approved and welcomed the report and acknowledged the important role that the HE-BCI Survey has in understanding the commercialisation of higher education knowledge, and the similarities and differences between the UK's constituent countries.

#### *Promotion*

6.4 The Committee recommended that HEFCW use this report to help build the reputation of the HE sector, especially in relation to its efforts to access Horizon 2020 funding. It was noted that the jointly commissioned Elsevier report *International Comparative Performance of the Welsh Research Base* which highlights high levels of research productivity and citation impacts from HE in Wales had been launched and received a good response in Brussels. A similar approach might be adopted for this subgroup report.

6.5 The report could form a suite of documents to help raise the reputation of higher education both within and outside Wales. HEFCW should look to jointly promote findings from these reports in their press release on the HE-BCI data for 2012/13. A section of the HE-BCI subgroup report (such as that on Spinouts) could be showcased at the HE Wales week in June. It would be important to reinforce the value of the HE-BCI Survey within universities themselves, especially with the phasing out of HEFCW's I&E funding.

#### *Action*

6.6 The importance of developing and monitoring international collaborations was noted, including those with business. Members emphasised the ambitious cross-stakeholder approaches to access H2020 included those from Scotland, the Basque region and Denmark. Ireland is implementing a 'simple and direct' method, and it was felt that further dialogue with officials there could be particularly helpful.

6.7 It was noted that the Welsh Government has set up a unit to support engagement with Horizon 2020, and that a report is currently being prepared to steer its activity. The Unit is likely to be 'hands off', in so far as it will support partners to maximise its engagement, rather than provide an overarching strategy. If the HE sector feels a strategy is required, then DEST can convey this to Welsh Government.

6.8 The Remit Letter for 2014-15 requires HEFCW to provide 'an assessment of the contribution to Wales of Welsh HE in all its different dimensions', which includes research, innovation and engagement. Despite having limited funds available, it was acknowledged that HEFCW can guide the funding of HE to produce change. It was agreed that further discussions with DfES, DEST and CSAW colleagues would be required to decide how the intelligence produced

in the subgroup's report can feed into decision-making (i.e. *Innovation Wales and Science for Wales*).

- 6.9 It was agreed that ESIF could be a value resource to enable HE to maintain and develop I&E activity, but concerns were raised about the level of investment in Wales (13% of the budget had been invested in knowledge infrastructure in the previous programme), compared to other regions (such as Saxony and Basque regions, which had each invested over three times this amount). Even given a larger budget, resources would need to be carefully targeted to make an impact.

#### *Future Analyses*

- 6.10 It could be helpful to benchmark activity and funding in Wales with other regions, such that conducted by Million Plus [Smarter Regions, Smarter Britain: boosting regional growth through universities](#) which suggests that imbalances in regional growth in England can be addressed by boosting the role of universities.
- 6.11 The Committee noted that the strategic use of funding to support university and business links (such as I&E and A4B) has established Wales on a very good footing. However, it expressed concern about the potential for Wales to maintain this performance given the increase in dedicated funding in other home countries, coupled with the withdrawal of I&E funding in Wales. The redeployment of student fees was thought by several members to be unrealistic, particularly given the increasing expectations by students and investment in provision.
- 6.12 The Committee agreed that it would establish a new *I&E subgroup* (to include DEST, HEW, HEFCW and others) to determine whether there are specific activities that HEFCW, with its partners, might undertake to further facilitate specific HE I&E activity. It was agreed that the remit of this group would be tightly focused and that there should be tangible outcomes.
- 6.13 In terms of the subgroup report and future analysis, it was agreed that it would be helpful to better understand the context of the data in order to promote positive findings and explain gaps. This could include some qualitative analyses surrounding some of these issues to present to decision-makers. The scope of this work would need to be explored closely with universities so there could be clarity on what they are already doing and what they could deliver if additional support could be sourced.
- 6.14 Potential areas for this group to consider include:
- Building on the subgroup report, decide upon further analyses. This may be externally commissioned, and:
    - provide a deeper understanding of drivers and contexts affecting HE/ business infrastructure in Wales (potentially comparing with other UK regions and exploring the impacts of e.g. structural funding)

- explore how the reduction in I&E funding is affecting behaviour in Wales, specifically assess the impact of a ring-fenced IEF up to 2013/14 and subsequent withdrawal from 2014 (potentially comparing with e.g. HEIF in England)
  - explore in greater depth the reasons for apparent inconsistencies and trends, e.g. contract research (which has gone up in all other home countries) and consultancy; commercialisation: HE can access SMEs but IP protection in Wales is poor compared to other regions.
  - show what activity could be delivered to fill the gaps given the availability of funding
  - find related funding that might be used constructively to support specific activities.
- With the WILO network, provide advice to HEFCW on how it can improve its guidance to universities on HE-BCI data collection to increase its data validity and reliability in Wales.
- 6.15 ESIF will be available for the next six years and the Committee agreed that will be important to explore how this funding can be used most productively to support this agenda. The current round of A4B is being wound down and DEST is actively planning for the new programme. It will be very supportive of input from this Committee to explore how a new fund might be used more effectively, and what the awarding criteria should be.
- 6.16 Dr Thomas subsequently circulated a report: by HEFCE on their knowledge exchange funding from 2002 to 2012: [Knowledge exchange performance and the impact of HEIF in the English higher education sector](#), and relevant to this discussion.

## **7 HEFCW's Strategic Approach to Research, Innovation & Engagement**

- 7.1 Bethan Owen introduced the paper which was intentionally shared at a very early stage of development. It describes HEFCW's role in relation to the delivery of the research, innovation and engagement agendas in support of HEFCW's Corporate Strategy. The main aim of the paper was to seek the Committee's advice on the added value that HEFCW can bring to the I&E agenda, given the withdrawal of the I&E Fund and the associated requirement for universities' I&E strategies.
- 7.2 The Committee emphatically agreed that HEFCW had an important role as a key facilitator in this area for the sector, but that more thought needs to be given to how this will operate in practice, and this will be linked to the work being progressed under the previous item.
- 7.3 It was noted that HEFCW is currently developing its Strategic Engagement with the sector across its main priorities, including RI&E.
- 7.4 Members were invited to provide feedback on this paper via email to Dr Thomas.

## **8 National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB) – Update**

- 8.1 Dr Thomas provided an oral report on HEFCW's role with NCUB, which is funded by all the UK HE funding bodies, RCUK and TSB. HEFCW sits on the Funders Group, and its financial contribution is provided by the Welsh Government (£33k). NCUB staff recently met with HEFCW, HEW and DEST. NCUB will develop an action plan identifying where it can add value to work in Wales; the aim is that it will implement key projects from the UK locally.

## **9 Sources of Research Income of HEIs in Wales 2012/13**

- 9.1 The Committee received a paper, for information, on the sources of research income for higher education institutions (HEIs) in Wales in 2012/13, together with comparative data for earlier years.
- 9.2 The Chair noted that QR funding in Wales as a proportion of the UK total had dropped once again that this would affect the potential for the Wales research base to compete. It was also noted that Wales' share of Research Council income in 2012/13 had dropped from 3.4% of the UK total to 3.0%. HEFCW had already undertaken some initial investigation of the reasons. It was agreed that this situation should be closely monitored.
- 9.3 It was reported that HEW is participating in work by UUK on the value of QR.

## **10 HEFCW's Remit Letter 2014-15**

- 10.1 The Committee received a copy of HEFCW's remit letter 2014-15 for information.

## **11 Minutes of the Meeting of SETQC held on 23 October 2013 & 29 January 2014**

- 11.1 The Committee received, for information, the minutes of the meeting of HEFCW's Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee (SETQC) held on 23 October 2013 and 29 January 2014.

## **12 Any other Business**

- 12.1 No other business was reported.

## **13 Next meeting**

- 13.1 The Committee will meet on the following date in 2014:

- Thursday, 16 October 2014

- 13.2 As previously agreed, this meeting will start at 10.30 am.