

<p>Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru Higher Education Funding Council for Wales</p> 	<p>Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee</p> <p>Disclosable</p>
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Unconfirmed notes of the meeting of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee held on 16 October 2014 at the HEFCW offices, Cardiff

Present

Members Professor Robin Williams (Chair)

Bryn Jones – Chair, Wales Industrial Liaison Officers Network (WILOs)
Chris Meadows – business representative, IQE plc
Professor David Shepherd – Bangor University
Professor Mark E Smith - representing HEFCW Council
Professor Hilary Lappin-Scott - Swansea University
Phil Allen - Welsh Government (DEST)
Alexandra Saxon – Research Councils UK

Attendees David Allen, Chair of HEFCW Council

Observers Berwyn Davies, Welsh Higher Education Brussels (WHEB)
Dr Carolyn Reeve, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Jon Waters – Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales
Amanda Wilkinson – Universities Wales

Officers Jackie Cresswell-Griffith – Head of Skills and Employability
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

Apologies Professor Kevin Morgan - Cardiff University
Sue Morgan – Welsh Government (DEST)
Peter Quantick – representing Welsh Higher Education European Liaison Officers (WHEELOs)
Professor Nigel Scollan – Aberystwyth University
Professor Mike Scott –Universities Wales nominee
Professor Stephen Tomlinson – representing HEFCW Council

1 Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed the following to their first meeting of the Committee:

- Chris Meadows, Open Innovation Director, IQE plc (business representative)

- Dr Carolyn Reeve, Head of Policy for University Research and Knowledge Exchange, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), who had joined the Committee as an observer
- David Allen, incoming Chair of HEFCW Council

1.2 The Chair invited David Allen to say a few words to the Committee in his capacity of incoming Chair of Council. David Allen commented:

- That, under the new arrangements for undergraduate tuition fees, the tuition fee grant is now the first call on HEFCW funding. The Council is continuing to give high priority to maintaining QR and PGR funding, and is aware that QR funding in Wales is already below the benchmark figure of 5% of the UK total. In relation to innovation and engagement, it is recognised that there is an investment gap relative to England following the withdrawal of HEFCW's Innovation and Engagement Fund.
- HEFCW is working with the Welsh Government and the Chief Scientific Adviser to align the available resources as effectively as possible. It is also important to target the highest-spending Research Councils (EPSRC and MRC) and to use Horizon 2020 as effectively as possible.
- Despite the challenging financial climate, it is encouraging that Swansea University and Cardiff University are both engaged in ambitious programmes of capital investment for research and innovation.
- HEFCW's role is to champion the sector, provide investment as far as this is possible, and create the right opportunities.

2 Notes of the Meeting held on 3 April 2014

2.1 The notes of the meeting held on 3 April 2014 were accepted as a true record.

3 Matters Arising

a) 4: Proposed Spearhead Programme

3.1 It was reported that the Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Julie Williams, has recast the proposed Spearhead programme so that it will now be a European-funded programme. This should result in considerable leverage of additional funding into Wales. She has largely retained the original structure, involving a number of separate strands of activity under the overall Spearhead brand.

3.2 HEFCW has agreed to provide a contribution for Spearhead of up to the amount currently remaining uncommitted in its budget for Sêr Cymru (approximately £3.8 million). Professor Williams and colleagues have submitted a bid for European funding for the first strand of Spearhead (COFUND). It is understood that the outcome of the bid will be announced in

March 2015 and that, if successful, a call for applications for Fellowships will be issued in October 2015.

4 Welsh Higher Education Brussels: Strategic Plan 2015-18

- 4.1 The Chair invited Berwyn Davies (WHEB's Head of Office) to give a presentation on WHEB's strategic plan 2015-18 which had recently been agreed by the Universities Wales Committee. Under the new strategic plan, WHEB will maintain its delivery for year one, and subject to levering in additional funds, it will move to a model of expansion in years two and three.
- 4.2 Mr Davies first outlined: changes to the European Commission (EC) under its incoming President Jean-Claude Juncker; WHEB's current work programme 2014-15, including its Research Co-ordinating Groups, the sector's engagement with Horizon2020 and predecessor programme Framework7; and WHEB's links to the Sêr Cymru National Research Networks (NRNs).
- 4.3 He then outlined WHEB's strategic plan 2015-18 which has three objectives: to increase the engagement of the sector with EU institutions and networks; to influence the EU's post-2020 funding programmes; and to make the delivery of WHEB's work more efficient, especially bearing in mind current staffing levels (2FTE and intern). Of these, the first objective, to increase engagement, is the main priority.
- 4.3 In terms of influencing H2020, Mr Davies emphasised the importance of platforms such as European Innovation Partnerships (EIP), European Technology Platforms (ETP) and the Horizon2020 Advisory Groups which will shape the future direction of H2020 which in turn influences the calls in the annual work programmes. Disseminating the experiences of Welsh researchers who take part in programme evaluation panels should also help the sector to adjust their applications to the requirements of the calls.
- 4.4 The Committee was invited to discuss three questions: how can WHEB better support collaboration between universities and businesses; how can it promote research and innovation from Wales as a part of the UK's Presidency of the EU in 2017; and how can the RIE Committee best support WHEB in its strategic visits to Brussels?
- 4.5 The Committee congratulated WHEB on its work and the successful relationship it has developed with the sector. A number of areas for future liaison between WHEB and the Committee (and individual members) were discussed, including those where WHEB will seek to:
- influence Horizon2020 through engagement with the UK International Unit and BIS, and through direct contact with EU officials and processes
 - encourage sector collaboration with industrial partners, such as in visits to Brussels arranged by WHEB and in the development of H2020 programmes and calls
 - promote the Welsh Government's Smart Specialisation Strategy which has been favourably endorsed via a platform set up by the EC (S3). This focuses

- on regional innovation strengths to achieve economic growth; and by closer working with the sector's Wales Industrial Liaison Officers (WILOs)
- explore with BIS and Welsh Government the potential for WHEB's involvement in a programme of events for the UK's EU Presidency. The Committee agreed that this activity should start as soon as possible
 - propagate the success of the sector in H2020 and universities' roles in enabling industrial partners in Wales to participate in the programme, especially by reference to relevant participation data

5 HEFCW Consultation on Approach to Funding in 2015/16 and Subsequent Years

- 5.1 The Committee considered a paper which summarised the outcomes, in areas relevant to the Committee, of HEFCW's consultation on the approach to funding in 2015/16 and subsequent years.
- 5.2 Members supported HEFCW's proposal not to make fundamental changes to the existing QR funding method in 2015/16, and to defer any more extensive review of arrangements for research funding to the slightly longer term. It was confirmed that any such more fundamental review would involve further consultation with the sector.
- 5.3 The Committee discussed the proposal that submission of copies of institutional research strategies should be made a condition of QR funding. Several members were concerned, particularly in the wider context of the HE Bill and references elsewhere in RIE documentation to HEFCW's role as a regulator, that this would result in HEFCW taking an interventionist role in relation to institutional research management.
- 5.4 David Allen assured members that that was not the case. Provision of the research strategies would provide HEFCW with a valuable overview of research at sector level, which would be helpful in dialogue with Welsh Government. Given the small size of the sector, the research strategies would also provide the basis for meaningful dialogue with PVCs Research. It was emphasised that the strategies would not be used for funding purposes, and that HEFCW would not specify a template for them. On that basis, the Committee was more supportive of the proposal, but emphasised that HEFCW would need to explain the rationale very clearly to the sector.
- 5.6 The discussion also touched on arrangements for publication and analysis of the outcomes of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework. Hilary Lappin-Scott outlined a number of potential data analyses, and indicated that she would be keen to discuss these further with HEFCW. Amanda Wilkinson requested that HEFCW should discuss arrangements for the announcement of REF outcomes with Universities Wales. It was noted that the Committee would have a full discussion of REF outcomes at its next meeting in February 2015.

Agreed:

- That the Committee's comments would be fed in to the Council's discussion of the outcomes of the funding consultation
- That HEFCW would liaise with Hilary Lappin-Scott and, other institutions if appropriate, over potential data analyses for REF
- That HEFCW would liaise with Universities Wales about arrangements for the announcement of REF outcomes.

6 Research, Innovation and Engagement: HEFCW's Role and Action Plan 2014/15 to 2015/16

6.1 The Committee considered a paper on HEFCW's role in respect of research, innovation and engagement and an action plan for 2014/15 and 2015/16. The document had been drawn up with the assistance of a sub-group of the Committee. It sought, in particular, to define HEFCW's role in relation to innovation and engagement following the withdrawal of the Innovation and Engagement Fund.

6.2 Members suggested the following amendments:

- Inclusion of references to research impact, which is now an important component of the Research Excellence Framework
- Transferring the reference to "assuring of the quality of research" from the section headed "HEFCW's role as a regulator" to one of the other two sections
- Inclusion of reference to HEFCW's role in relation to the HE-BCI Survey under its role as a Regulator.

6.3 Amanda Wilkinson asked whether there was a need for greater prioritisation of activity. Alyson Thomas responded that some of the activities, such as strategic planning and institutional risk assessment, were undertaken across HEFCW, and not solely by the RIE Team. She also indicated that the document provided a record of existing activity.

6.4 Amanda suggested that it would be helpful to have some form of wider consultation with the sector before the document was published.

6.5 The Committee then discussed the provision of evidence to the Diamond Review. Alyson Thomas indicated that it would be very useful to have some concrete examples from the sector of the consequences of the withdrawal of Innovation and Engagement Fund. It was agreed that HEFCW should contact institutions to request such material.

Agreed

- That the document would be amended to reflect the Committee's comments
- That there would be some form of wider consultation with the sector prior to publication of the document

- That HEFCW would write to institutions to request specific examples of the consequences of the withdrawal of the Innovation and Engagement Fund, for inclusion in HEFCW's submission to the Diamond Review.

7 Higher Education - Business and Communities Interaction (HE-BCI) Survey 2012/13

- 7.1 The Committee considered a paper which presented the report of the Higher Education – Business Interaction (HE-BCI) Survey for 2012/13 together with an analysis of the data for Wales. The analysis was informed by the outcomes of the working group which the Committee had established in 2013 to advise on the most effective use of HE-BCI data.
- 7.2 The Committee noted the positive headline messages, as well as those areas in which Wales performs less strongly. It also noted that there were some indicators which would benefit from a more in-depth understanding of institutional context and individual approaches to data returns.
- 7.3 The Chair requested that, in future, the regional comparisons should be normalised by staff numbers and by HERD.
- 7.4 It was noted that the material in the paper would also be used at a forthcoming workshop with the WILOs, which would consider how better consistency of HE-BCI Survey returns might be achieved across Wales.
- 7.5 Summing up, the Chair commented that Wales performs reasonably well in the HE-BCI Survey, particularly given levels of HE Research and Development (HERD) funding and QR, and the size of the staff base. There were, however, concerns that the sector might lose its edge in this area following the withdrawal of the Innovation and Engagement Fund, and it would be important to monitor HE-BCI data closely over the next few years for any signs of this.

Agreed:

- That HE-BCI data should continue to be monitored closely in future years
- That regional data should be normalised in future analyses.

8 Amendments to RIE Committee's Constitution

- 8.1 The Committee considered and approved a paper which recommended a number of adjustments to the composition of the Committee.

Agreed:

- That the amendments should be submitted to Council for approval.

9 Draft Annual Report of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee to Council 2013/14

9.1 The Committee considered and approved the draft Annual Report of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee 2013/14.

Agreed:

- That the report should be submitted to Council.

10 Update on the National Council for Universities and Business

10.1 The Committee received an update on the work of the National Council for Universities and Business (NCUB) with particular reference to aspects of the business plan and activities which are of relevance to Wales.

11 BIS Capital Consultation and Science and Innovation Strategy

11.1 The Committee received a paper which presented HEFCW's submission to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' (BIS) consultation on research capital investment, and reported on the development of a new UK Science and Innovation Strategy.

11.2 It was noted that the new UK Science and Innovation Strategy and the outcomes of the capital consultation, including a capital investment roadmap, would be published alongside the 2014 Autumn Statement.

12 Minutes of the Meeting of SETQC held on 14 May 2014

12.1 The Committee received, for information, the minutes of the meeting of HEFCW's Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee (SETQC) held on 14 May 2014.

13 Any other Business

13.1 No other business was raised.

14 Dates of Future Meetings

14.1 The Committee will meet on the following dates in 2015:

- Tuesday, 10 February 2015
- Thursday, 15 October 2015