

Council Meeting*For discussion***Diamond Review evidence report**Agenda: 8
HEFCW/16/04

Disclosable

22/01/2016**1 Issue**

- 1.1 The Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements commenced in April 2014, chaired by Professor Sir Ian Diamond. The interim report from the Review was published in December, 2015. The opportunity is being taken for the Council to consider, and respond to, the interim report.

2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper

- 2.1 The outcomes of the Review, and the government response, are expected to have major implications for the way in which higher education in Wales is funded in future and, consequently, for the role and operation of the Council. The Chief Executive is on 'official observer' on the Review and we have provided evidence to it.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council is invited to:
- i. note and comment on the interim report of the Review.

4 Timing for decisions

- 4.1 Whilst no decisions are sought from Council at this point, views expressed will inform future deliberations of the Review Panel.

5 Council members' interests

- 5.1 No conflicts of interests have been declared in advance of the meeting.

6 Further information

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7 Interim report from the Diamond Review

- 7.1 The Diamond Review has received and considered a substantial range of evidence from a large range of contributors in support of its work. The interim report provides a summary of the evidence which has been received up to September 2015. The report identifies common themes and messages arising from the evidence but does not attempt to make a judgement about the validity, accuracy or significance of the information submitted. Neither does the review seek to represent the Panel's views nor to give a sense of possible future recommendations. These will not enter the public domain until the final report is published which will be after the Assembly elections in May 2016.
- 7.2 The interim report is a large document and is not printed with this paper. It can be found on the government website [here](#). It will also be placed on the extranet for members to access. Whilst the report deliberately avoids signposting the direction of future recommendations, Sir Ian Diamond has indicated that there is a broad consensus from the evidence submitted that the current arrangements are not sustainable.

Council is invited to note and comment on the interim report of the Review.

8 Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this paper but the outcomes of the review process are likely to have significant implications for future funding of higher education in Wales.

9 Communications implications

There are no immediate communications implications arising from this paper. Communications regarding the Diamond Review are a matter for Welsh government. We do not expect to make public any conclusions arising from our consideration of the report.

10 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 10.1 This paper has no implications for age, disability, marital/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, any other protected characteristic.

11 Risk Assessment

- 11.1 There are risks that the recommendations in the final report, and the associated government response, render it more difficult for the Council to deliver its statutory role and to exercise policy leverage. This risk is being mitigated via our input to the Review Panel process and engagement with Welsh government officials and other stakeholders.