

Council Meeting*For information***Regional Reporting**Agenda: 25
HEFCW/17/30

Disclosable

22/03/2017**1 Issue**

- 1.1 This paper provides a summary of final reporting against HEFCW's regional strategies and an update on its new regional reporting policy.

2 Rationale for paper

- 2.1 In 2010 HEFCW developed an integrated approach to the regional planning of higher education in Wales, resulting in the development of three HEFCW regions which each produced a regional strategy that ran from 2011/12 to 2014/15.
- 2.2 HEFCW's [Corporate Strategy 2013-14 to 2016-17](#) aims to "secure graduates who are equipped for life and work, and universities that contribute to an upskilled workforce" and "secure a reconfigured higher education system with strong providers that, through collaborative partnership working, particularly regionally, offers more accessible higher education opportunities and a stronger HE offering across Wales."

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are invited to note the paper.

4 Timing for decisions

- 4.1 There are no timing implications.

5 Members' interests

- 5.1 No conflicts of interests have been declared in advance of the meeting other than those held on the register.

6 Further information

- 6.1 Contact Jackie Cresswell-Griffith (029 2085 9740; jackie.cresswell-griffith@hefcw.ac.uk); Steve Williams (029 2085 9744; steven.williams@hefcw.ac.uk).

7 HEFCW's regional approach

- 7.1 In response to a remit request¹, HEFCW developed an integrated approach to regional planning by requesting that three regional groups of higher education providers in Wales [develop a strategy for the planning and delivery of Higher Education in Wales](#) for the 2010/11 academic year. The regions were:
- **North and Mid Wales** (Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, Wrexham Glyndŵr University, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai² and the Open University in Wales);
 - **South East Wales** (Cardiff University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, University of South Wales³, Bridgend College and the Open University in Wales); and
 - **South West Wales** (University of Wales Trinity Saint David⁴, Swansea University, Gower College, Neath Port Talbot College, Pembrokeshire College and the Open University in Wales).
- 7.2 In 2011 HEFCW requested that [revised strategies](#) be submitted covering a three year period from 2011/12 to 2013/14. These were subsequently extended for a further year to include 2014/15. Under this approach HEFCW's regional partnerships reported annually on progress through Annual Monitoring Statements submitted to HEFCW. These strategies set out:
- The vision, aims and objectives of the regional partnerships;
 - A summary of high level outcomes of an audit of higher education course provision across the region;
 - Progression routes from post-16 education into higher education and from higher education to other higher education in the region;
 - New higher education provision required in the region;
 - Opportunities for more coordinated widening access activities;
 - Opportunities for joint regional work with employers;
 - Collaborative capital developments and shared services;
 - The governance of the regional partnerships.
- 7.3 Funding was provided to develop foundation degrees, to build capacity to make better use of evidence through labour market intelligence, to plan higher education, and develop regional shared services. Arrangements were also made for the redistribution of HE credits across the region. Separately an evaluation of the foundation degrees funded by HEFCW is being conducted and will be reported to Council in due course.
- 7.4 In June HEFCW requested that its regional partnerships produce a final report against their strategy (HEFCW/16/CE3 refers). This report would signal the end of that particular regional reporting mechanism.

8 Final reporting

- 8.1 In Autumn 2016 HEFCW received final reports from each of HEFCW's regional partnerships on their strategies for 2011/12 to 2014/15.

¹ [HEFCW, Remit letter from Welsh Government, 2009-10](#)

² The region included Coleg Llandrillo Cymru as an individual institution prior to its merger with Coleg Menai to become Grŵp Llandrillo Menai.

³ The region included University of Glamorgan & University of Wales, Newport as individual institutions.

⁴ The region included Coleg Sir Gâr, Swansea Metropolitan University & University of Wales Trinity Saint David as individual institutions and Coleg Ceredigion as an associate partner.

- 8.2 Over the period of the strategies HEFCW's regional partnerships have undertaken the following to meet their individual partnership objectives. Officers are considering the scope for publicising the outcomes of the initiative:
- HE institutions in two regions merged to deliver on a Welsh Government priority;
 - Develop new HE and FE partnerships to rationalise HE in FE provision;
 - Individually and collaboratively develop online learning portals that share good practice about the use of contemporary technology and media within higher education and offer free learning to the public;
 - Individually and collaboratively develop new and improve existing pathways to higher education;
 - Individually and collaboratively develop provision at all levels, including work-based provision, that meets the needs of local employers;
 - Increase the number of Continuing Professional Development workshops;
 - Work collaboratively with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to develop Welsh Medium provision;
 - Develop new collaborative activities to widen access into higher education and increase postgraduate study;
 - Develop new activities to raise awareness of science and support access to STEM subjects in HE;
 - Promote their region internationally;
 - Develop new international opportunities in the region;
 - Establish a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) network and embed RPL activity across institutions;
 - Support research and development investment into the regions;
 - Increase the number of business start-ups in the region;
 - Work with regional skills partnerships and city regions.
- 8.3 HEFCW's regional partnerships will continue in relation to the Reaching Wider Partnerships.

9 HEFCW's new regional reporting process

- 9.1 HEFCW's new regional reporting process aligns with the Welsh Government's regional structure for delivering skills policy (HEFCW/16/CE3 refers). The regional structure is made up of three regional skills partnerships: the Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership (LSkip) in South East Wales, the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP) in South West and Mid Wales and the Skills Group of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) in North Wales. The regional skills partnerships include representation from employers, employer representative groups, Welsh Government, higher education providers and other key stakeholders in the region. HEFCW is not represented on any of the regional skills partnerships.
- 9.2 LSkip and the RLSP are partners of the Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay City Region respectively. The city partnerships are central to the Cardiff and Swansea city deals. Separately in North Wales, the NWEAB is exploring a growth deal for North Wales.
- 9.3 The regional skills partnerships were set up with the expectation that they produce and analyse labour market information to inform:
- the skill requirements of the regions;

- review skills provision and advise Welsh Government of future prioritisation of skills;
 - take a strategic role to inform a demand-led sustainable skills system; and
 - maximise future funding opportunities such as deployment of further education funding, apprenticeships, traineeships, the skills priorities programme and European funded projects.
- 9.4 Regional skills partnerships produce an annual Regional Employment and Skills Plan for Welsh Government. HEFCW have worked with Welsh Government to analyse the 2016 plans and develop the higher education section of the specification for the 2017 plans.
- 9.5 At the request of HEFCW, higher education providers that engage with each regional skills partnership have collectively nominated an individual to meet with HEFCW on a regular basis. The purpose of these meetings will be to inform HEFCW of how higher education providers are playing into each regional skills partnership and responding individually and collaboratively to the needs identified by each of the regional skills partnerships. This will be an ongoing process and HEFCW will facilitate the sharing of good practice to improve regional working.
- 9.6 Regional priorities that universities are responding to, that are not covered through the regional skills partnerships are highlighted to HEFCW through its strategic planning and engagement document.

10 Risk Assessment

- 10.1 Identified risks arising from the issues covered by the paper are provided below:

Risk	Action to address risk
If one of more HE providers in Wales do not work effectively with other providers or employers in their region/locality then opportunities could be missed to either rationalise provision or develop provision that meets regional skills needs, and they will fail to meet WG expectations.	Implement HEFCW's new regional policy;
	Engagement with regional skills partnership (RSP) leads, some RSP structures and Welsh Government officials.