

**Minutes of the 162<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Council held on 24 January 2014 at HEFCW offices, Llanishen, Cardiff**

**Present:**

**Members:**

Mr Roger Thomas (Chairman)  
Dr David Blaney (Chief Executive)  
Mr David Allen  
Dame Sandra Burslem  
Mr David Mason  
Professor Mark E Smith  
Professor Stephen Tomlinson  
Professor Robin Williams

**Observers:**

Ms Heather Fry, Director of Education, Partnership & Students, HEFCE  
Mr Chris Jones, Head of HE Finance & Performance Improvement, Welsh Government  
Ms Stephanie Lloyd, President, National Union of Students Wales  
Mr Neil Surman, Head of HE Division, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, Welsh Government

**Officers:**

Mr Dale Hall (Council Secretary)  
Ms Celia Hunt  
Ms Bethan Owen  
Mr Nick Williams  
Mr Steve Williams (Observer)

**Apologies:**

Mrs Bethan Guilfoyle  
Professor Leni Oglesby  
Mr Ewart Wooldridge  
Mr Laurence Howells, Interim Chief Executive, SFC

**1. Introductory remarks and declarations of interest**

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed the observers to the meeting.
- 1.2 No specific members' interests were declared in relation to any of today's agenda items above and beyond those currently published on HEFCW's website. It was noted that there would be the usual annual check of members' declared interests before the end of the current financial year.

## **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2013 (HEFCW/13/Min161)**

- 2.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 8 November 2013, subject to an amended wording being put forward by the NUS observer to the final sentence of minute 20.1.  
*[Subsequent to the meeting, the NUS observer provided the following amended wording: 'With regard to the students' union funding guidance, it was further noted that in some universities in Wales there was an absence of independent advice units to advise and guide students on academic and welfare matters, which had led to untrained student officers having to provide this advice, leaving the officers in a vulnerable position.']*

## **3. Matters Arising (HEFCW/14/1)**

- 3.1 Council received a report on action taken following the previous Council meeting held 8 November 2013.

Noted:

***The paragraph below is exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (commercial interests; prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs)***

- 3.2 Exempt minute

- 3.3 *Fee Plan Proposals from 2015/16* (8 November 2013, minute 8.9) – This item had now been actioned: the consultation had been issued on 17 January.

***The paragraph below is exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs)***

- 3.4 Exempt minute

- 3.5 *Framework Document* (8 November 2013, minutes 14.2 & 14.3) – The revised Framework Document would be brought to Council's next meeting on 14 March.

- 3.6 *HEW/CHEW/HEFCW Strategic Dialogue meetings* (8 November 2013, minute 5.6) – At the suggestion of the NUS observer, it was agreed in principle, subject to agreement with HEW, that in addition to inviting the NUS Wales President to future Strategic Dialogue meetings other student representatives might also be invited.

## **4. Chairman's Report**

- 4.1 Council received an oral report from the Chairman on meetings and events attended since the last meeting of Council:

14 November 2013 – Meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Group for Education and Skills.  
18 November 2013 – Minister’s key note address on Wales’ higher education policy.  
29 November 2013 – Meeting with the Chairs of WGSBs  
4 December 2013 – Chairman and Chief Executive’s meeting with the Minister. Discussion topics included widening access; fees and funding; the Webb report; Remit Letter 2014-15; and the NAW Finance Committee Inquiry into Higher Education Funding.  
4 December 2013 – Aberystwyth-Bangor Strategic Alliance presentation in the Senedd  
13 January 2014 – Chairman and Chief Executive had met with the University of South Wales and Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama  
22 January 2014 – HR Committee meeting. There were no minutes yet of this Committee meeting, but Council was informed that nothing had arisen that needed to be reported to the Council ahead of the availability of the minutes at the March Council meeting.

- 4.2 The Chairman had completed nearly all of his annual appraisal meetings with Council members. He had also sent letters of congratulations to Welsh higher education staff and other individuals who had received awards in the 2014 New Year’s Honours.

## 5. Chief Executive’s Report (HEFCW/14/CE1)

***The paragraph below is exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (commercial interests; prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs)***

### 5.1 Exempt minute

### 5.2 Update on Institutional Visit to Glyndŵr University (Oral)

The scheduled Institutional Visit on 13 March had been postponed as on this date the Vice-Chancellor was now accompanying the Secretary of State for Wales to a meeting with business leaders in Paris. Officers would liaise with the University to arrange a new date.

### 5.3 Remit Letter 2014-15 (Oral)

A draft had been shared with the office. Further discussions with Welsh Government officers were due to take place on 4 February.

### 5.4 Increasing the number of women and other under-represented groups in public appointments

The Council noted the letter from the Minister of 13 November 2013 on the above issue, which had followed similar correspondence received earlier in 2013. The letter requested a progress report from HEFCW by the end of June 2014.

Council agreed that the aim should be to have a process that delivered both diversity and the desired outcome of a Council with the required

skills to allow it to function properly and that neither should be to the exclusion of the other. The key to achieving this was good preparation in the early stages of the Welsh Government's recruitment process. It was proposed that the response to the Minister in June should include the following recommendations:

- That it should always be borne in mind that in pursuing the desire for diversity it was also necessary to have a Council with the skills/expertise to lead the work of the Council and that the appointment of new members should continue to be made firmly on the basis of merit.
- That any Welsh Government recruitment advertisements should encourage a diverse range of applicants, and that that should be impressed upon any recruitment firms ("head hunters") employed to assist.

The Welsh Government observer said he would ask Howell Rees, Head of the Public Appointments Unit, to meet with officers to talk through the Welsh Government's appointments process, including latest progress on the action plan to increase the number of women and other under-represented groups.

***The paragraph below is exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs)***

5.5 Exempt minute

5.6 UCAS data

(Due to confidentiality issues associated with sharing of the data, the circulation of this item was restricted to HEFCW Council members and officers, and Welsh Government observers.)

***The paragraph below is exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (commercial interests)***

Exempt minute

5.7 Council received and noted number of items for information:

- Chief Executive's calendar of meetings since the last Council meeting on 8 November 2013. The meeting with Owen Evans, originally scheduled for 21 January, was being rearranged.
- Sêr Cymru Programme
- Research Council Doctoral Training Centres
- Note of Members' Workshop, 7 November 2013

- Note of Institutional Visit to UHOVI, 7 November 2013

## 6. Recurrent Funding AY 2014/15 (HEFCW/14/2)

6.1 The paper set out the Council's baseline grant settlement for Financial Year (FY) 2014-15 and invited steers to guide the development of specific proposals for the distribution of recurrent grant for Academic Year (AY) 2014/15.

6.2 Council noted that the proposals set out in the paper reflected:

- The steers provided by Council in November 2013 through discussion of paper HEFCW/13/78, and the approaches agreed through subsequent email correspondence with members in December 2013, to ensure affordability overall for the next few years.
- The final budget for FY 2014-15 published by the Welsh Government in December 2013.
- The receipt of fully verified HESA and HESES data, which showed slightly larger under-recruitment in AY 2012/13 than originally anticipated and, consequently, a slightly reduced call on fee grant contributions for the year.
- Final confirmation from the Welsh Government of additional funding for Cardiff University in lieu of medical numbers transferred to Swansea University.
- Further progress on discussions with HEW over future funding support arrangements for various sector agencies and programmes.

***The paragraphs below are exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs; for future publication)***

6.3 Exempt minute

6.4 Exempt minute

6.5 Exempt minute

6.6 Exempt minute

6.7 Exempt minute

6.8 Exempt minute

6.9 Exempt minute

6.10 Exempt minute

- 6.11 Exempt minute
- 6.12 Exempt minute
- 6.13 Exempt minute
- 6.14 Exempt minute
- 6.15 Exempt minute
- 6.16 Exempt minute
- 6.17 Exempt minute
- 6.18 Exempt minute
- 6.19 Exempt minute
- 6.20 Exempt minute
- 6.21 Exempt minute
- 6.22 Exempt minute

**7. Update on institutional risk issues (HEFCW/14/3)**

***The paragraphs below are exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (commercial interests; prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs)***

- 7.1 Exempt minute
- 7.2 Exempt minute
- 7.3 Exempt minute
- 7.4 Exempt minute
- 7.5 Exempt minute
- 7.6 Exempt minute
- 7.7 Exempt minute
- 7.8 Exempt minute
- 7.9 Exempt minute
- 7.10 Exempt minute

## **8. HE Bill (HEFCW/14/4)**

- 8.1 The paper updated Council on the current position with regard to the proposed regulatory framework for higher education in Wales. Council noted the key points set out in the paper on the proposals in the Higher Education (Wales) Bill.

***The paragraphs below are exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs)***

8.2 Exempt minute

8.3 Exempt minute

8.4 Exempt minute

8.5 Exempt minute

8.6 Exempt minute

8.7 Exempt minute

## **9. WAO recommendations on Higher Education Finances (HEFCW/14/5)**

- 9.1 The paper presented proposed responses to the recommendations in the Wales Audit Office report of November 2013 into Higher Education Finances. The proposed responses would also be shared for comment with Audit and Risk Assurance Committee members. HEFCW had not yet been notified of the deadline for submitting its responses.

Resolved:

***The paragraph below is exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (for future publication)***

9.2 Exempt minute

- 9.3 To delegate authority to the Chair and Chief Executive to finalise the responses in consideration of Council's comments and also any comments from Audit and Risk Assurance Committee members.

## **10. Part-time study in HE strategic position (HEFCW/14/6)**

- 10.1 The paper sought Council's advice on the further development of a draft of HEFCW's Part-time Higher Education Position Statement.

***The paragraph below is exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (for future publication)***

10.2 **Exempt minute**

- 10.3 The draft Statement would be considered at the next meeting of the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality (SETQ) Committee on 29 January. Once the Statement had been finalised, it would inform HEFCW's evidence to the Diamond Review of higher education funding in Wales.

Resolved:

- 10.4 To note the part-time action plan consultation responses.
- 10.5 To approve the draft Part-time Higher Education Position Statement, subject to Council's steers at minute 10.2.
- 10.6 To invite the SETQ Committee to consider the Statement at its next meeting on 29 January.

**11. Any other business**

- 11.1 None

**12. Date of next meeting**

- 12.1 The next Council meeting would be held on Friday 14 March 2014 at the HEFCW offices, Llanishen, Cardiff.

**13. Welsh Language Scheme: annual compliance report (HEFCW/14/7)**

Resolved:

- 13.1 To approve the third Welsh Language Scheme compliance report.
- 13.2 To delegate authority to the Chief Executive to make any final amendments to the report.

**14. Open Access Publication in post-2014 REF: consultation outcomes (HEFCW/14/8)**

Resolved:

- 14.1 To note and endorse the policy statement on open access publishing in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework.
- 14.3 To delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the policy statement in conjunction with the other three UK HE funding bodies.

**15. Annual report of the Quality Assurance Agency for 2012/13 (HEFCW/14/9)**

Resolved:  
15.1 To approve the final report of the QAA on progress towards meeting the activities for 2012/13 set out in the SLA.

15.2 To note the QAA programme of services for 2013/14.

**16. HE Academy annual report (HEFCW/14/10)**

Resolved:  
16.1 To approve the final report of the Higher Education Academy on performance against the HEFCW grant letter for 2012/13.

**For information papers:**

**17. Reconfiguration and Collaboration (HEFCW/14/11)**

**18. Evidence for NaFW Finance Committee Inquiry into Higher Education Funding (HEFCW/14/12)**

**19. Cash expenditure report for the period April to September 2013 and update on financial year 2013-14 (HEFCW/14/13)**

**20. April to September Accruals Based Management Accounts report 2013-14 (HEFCW/14/14)**

**21. Minutes of the SETQC meeting held 23 October 2013 and SETQC Annual Report 2012/13 (HEFCW/14/15)**