
Minutes of the 168th meeting of the Council held on 23 January 2015 at Bangor University.

Present:

Members:

David Allen (Chair)
Dr David Blaney (Chief Executive)
Dame Sandra Burslem
Bethan Guilfoyle
David Mason
Professor Leni Oglesby
Professor Mark Smith
Professor Stephen Tomlinson
Professor Robin Williams
Ewart Wooldridge

Observers:

Huw Morris, Group Director, Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, Welsh Government
Neil Surman, Head of HE Division, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, Welsh Government

Officers:

Dale Hall (Council Secretary)
Celia Hunt
Bethan Owen
Emma Rączka
Linda Tiller

Apologies:

Professor Madeleine Atkins, Chief Executive, HEFCE
Laurence Howells, Chief Executive, SFC
Beth Button, President, National Union of Students Wales
Nick Williams

1. Introductory remarks and declarations of interest

- 1.1. The Chair 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.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2014 (HEFCW/14/Min167)

- 2.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 7 November 2014.

3. Matters Arising (HEFCW/15/01)

- 3.1 Council received a report on action since the previous Council meeting held 7 November 2014.
- 3.2 *Strategic Dialogue: new arrangements* – Discussions were on-going with Universities Wales and CHEW on revised arrangements, including how to take forward the Minister's request for a 'social partnership'.
- 3.3 *'Higher Education for the Nation'* – The Council commended the executive for the completion of the document, which had been successfully launched at the Annual Public Meeting on 22 January. It would be important now to continue to publicise the success stories in higher education institutions in Wales of the kind that were highlighted in the document.

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

- 3.4 Exempt minute
- 3.5 *Operational Plan 2014-15* – A letter from Welsh Government dated 15 January (tabled with respect to agenda item 11) confirmed receipt of the revised Operational Plan, though formal approval of the Plan was still awaited. In the meantime, the executive continued to take forward the activities in the Plan as reported elsewhere on the agenda (HEFCW/15/08 refers).

4. Chair's Report

- 4.1 Council received and noted the Chair's Calendar of Meetings/Activities since the last meeting of Council on 7 November 2014.

5. Chief Executive's Report (HEFCW/15/CE1)

- 5.1 Reflections on the Institutional Visit to Bangor University, 22 Jan 2015
The paragraphs below are exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs; commercial interests).
Exempt minute

- 5.2 HEFCW National Widening Access Conference: *The Future Direction of Widening Access: Purpose, Policy and Practice*
The Council noted the summary outcomes report on the Widening Access Conference which took place on 2 December 2014. The Conference had been operationally tricky to organise, but was well attended and with good engagement by attendees. The Minister had given a speech on the importance of furthering links between universities and schools and had taken questions from the audience. The Conference also saw the launch of the publication 'Widening Access: Delivering for Wales', which presented many examples of good practice in Welsh institutions. The Chair had presented the Minister with a copy.

The Chair, and the Chair and Deputy Chair of SETQ Committee, who had each contributed to the conference, agreed that it had been a successful event which had generated positive discussion between delegates and provided a good showcase for HEFCW. The Council thanked the Director of Strategic Development and her team for organising the event.

The Conference outcomes paper was welcomed as a comprehensive summary of outputs, though it was suggested that the annex be amended to say more about promoting partnerships between schools and universities.

One observation from the Conference discussions was a variation in the types of relationships between schools and universities, and in the number of pupils from each school that go on to higher education, with relatively few pupils progressing to HE from some schools. The Council asked whether there was any further data on these issues available from the WISERD statistics on schools. Whilst this data wasn't able to be made public, officers commented that WISERD had identified as one of the underlying issues competing policy priorities in Wales, which had led to some schools focussing on areas such as Jobs Growth Wales and apprenticeships, while others focused on increasing the number of pupils going on to higher education.

Another issue raised by Council was that of the trends in Wales on access to the professions, where, for example, there was evidence that, for medicine, high social capital was an important influencing factor (e.g. students whose families were in the medical profession). What was the sector doing to address such issues? Officers noted current work on how universities could take account of other qualities and experiences of pupils in their selection processes, but more still needed to be done on this contextual data.

The next step would be to develop from the summary outcomes document a refined programme of action. The intention was then to hold a follow-up conference in around a year's time and to invite the Minister to present the progress and achievements arising out of the discussions at the 2014 Conference.

5.3 University update

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

5.3.1 Exempt minute

5.3.2 Exempt minute

5.3.3 Exempt minute

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5.3.16 Exempt minute

5.3.17 Exempt minute

5.3.18 Exempt minute

5.3.19 Exempt minute

5.3.20 Exempt minute

Resolved:

5.3.21 Exempt minute

5.3.22 Exempt minute

5.3.23 Exempt minute

5.3.24 Exempt minute

5.4 New regional reporting process

The paragraphs below are exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (for future publication.)

Exempt minute

Resolved:

To approve the proposed new approach to regional strategies from 2015/16.

- 5.5 Proposed amendments to Scheme of Delegation
A number of revisions had been made to the Scheme of Delegation in order to achieve consistency with the finalised Framework Document, and to improve clarity. In addition, it was proposed to significantly increase the limits of authority delegated to the Chair and to the Chief Executive, in particular to provide coverage in the eventuality, for example, of: (i) the need to make large fee-grant related payments to the Student Loans Company; (ii) the need to address a large and urgent cash flow requirement at an institution as a consequence of a sudden, existentially threatening change in their circumstances. In deriving the new delegated limits the executive had considered the equivalent schemes in operation at HEFCE and the SFC.

Resolved:

To approve the revised Scheme of Delegation.

The paragraphs below are exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (for future publication.)

- 5.6 Exempt minute
- 5.7 UCAS: latest applicant figures for 2015/16
The data from UCAS was unavailable at the time of today's meeting, but the figures for Wales would be circulated to Council members in due course.
- 5.8 Council received and noted number of items for information:
- Chief Executive's Calendar of Meetings since the last meeting of Council on 7 November 2014.
 - Welsh Language Standards.
 - Income analysis by institution for the Welsh HE Sector .
 - Appointments Committee actions: appointment of Gill George to the Council's Human Resources; Remuneration; and Appointments Committees, for a three year term to 30 November 2017.
 - Initial Teacher Training and the National Student Survey.
 - Report on exercises of delegated authority through the Scheme of Delegation.
 - Note of Members' Workshop, 6 November 2014.

6. Draft response to Diamond Review (HEFCW/15/02)

- 6.1 The paper presented a draft response to the Review of HE Funding and Student Finance (the Diamond Review). It included a draft detailed response along with a brief draft response based on the official Diamond submission template which was tabled at the meeting.
- 6.2 The draft response had been informed by feedback from the SETQ Committee and from a sub-group of the chairs of Council's policy-focussed committees. It would be considered further by SETQC and by RIEC at their respective meetings in early February, and would be

circulated again to all Council members before being submitted by the deadline of 27 February. It was hoped that there would be an opportunity for HEFCW to attend an evidence session with Professor Diamond to discuss its submission.

6.3 Professor Robin Williams declared that he had been involved in the preparation of the Learned Society for Wales' submission to the Diamond Review and in its presentation to the Review Panel on 22 January. He observed that the Learned Society's submission had made no comment on the political dimensions but rather had focussed on presenting arguments and criteria for proposed future funding models.

6.4 The Council reviewed the draft response and made the following observations and recommendations:

- As a general guiding principle, HEFCW's response must be supported by arguments clearly underpinned by evidence.
- Agreed that the detailed response was more important than the official template, and that the latter be used as a pointer to the relevant sections of the detailed response.

The paragraphs below are exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (for future publication).

- Exempt minute
- Exempt minute
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- Exempt minute
- Exempt minute

6.5 Exempt minute

Resolved:

6.6 To further develop the draft Diamond Review response to reflect the steers at minutes 6.4 and 6.5.

6.7 To delegate authority to the Chair and Chief Executive to submit the response, following consultation with advisory committees and a further opportunity for Council members to comment prior to submission.

7. Recurrent funding for AY 2015/16 (HEFCW/15/03)

7.1 The paper set out the Council's baseline grant settlement for 2015-16 Financial Year (FY) and invited the Council to provide steers to guide the development of specific proposals for the distribution of recurrent grant for 2015/16 Academic Year (AY).

7.2 The Council noted the following main points on the budget settlement and the assumptions made with respect to funding proposals for AY 2015/16.

The paragraphs below are exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (for future publication).

- Exempt minute
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7.3 Exempt minute

7.4 Exempt minute

7.5 Exempt minute

Resolved:

7.6 Exempt minute

7.7 Exempt minute

7.8 Exempt minute

7.9 Exempt minute

7.10 Exempt minute

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7.18 Exempt minute

7.19 Exempt minute

8. Outcomes of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (HEFCW/15/04)

8.1 The paper provided an overview of the sector's performance in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). Members had received a presentation by HEFCW's Senior Research Manager of the REF outcomes the previous evening. The Council agreed that it had been a very good result for Welsh institutions and that this was to be celebrated. In particular, it was noted that nearly half of the impact scores for the Welsh sector submissions had been assessed as world leading.

Resolved:

8.2 To note the contents of the paper.

9. QR funding 2015/16 (HEFCW/15/05)

9.1 The paper invited the Council to advise on QR funding arrangements for 2015/16 based on the outcomes of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF).

The paragraphs below are exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (for future publication).

9.2 Exempt minute

9.3 Exempt minute

9.4 Exempt minute

Resolved:

9.5 Exempt minute

9.6 Exempt minute

9.7 Exempt minute

10. New quality assessment arrangements (HEFCW/15/06)

10.1 The paper updated Council on the development of new quality assessment arrangements. HEFCE had published a paper recently seeking views on future quality assessment arrangements, and had established a Quality Assessment Review Steering Group to oversee the process. The Group included representation from the HEFCW Council and executive, and from Universities Wales.

10.2 The SETQ Committee would be discussing the consultation on the new arrangements at its next meeting in early February. Council members were invited to submit any further comments on the process to the executive by the end of January.

- Resolved:
- 10.3 To note the ongoing development of quality assessment arrangements.
 - 10.4 To support the draft principles and proposed approach set out in the paper.
 - 10.5 To delegate authority to Chief Executive to finalise HEFCW's input into the HEFCE consultation process.

11. HE (Wales) Bill Update (HEFCW/15/06)

- 11.1 The paper updated the Council on developments with the HE (Wales) Bill.

The paragraphs below are exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (for future publication)

11.2 Exempt minute

11.3 Exempt minute

11.4 Exempt minute

- Resolved:
- 11.5 To note the latest developments on the HE (Wales) Bill.

11.6 Exempt minute

12. Any other business
None.

13. Date of next meeting

- 13.1 Council meeting - 1:00pm, Thursday 12 March 2015 at the HEFCW offices, Llanishen, Cardiff.
- 13.2 Institutional Visit to Cardiff Metropolitan University - morning, Friday 13 March 2015.

Papers for approval without discussion:

No papers

Papers provided for information:

- 14. **Operational Plan update 2014-15 (HEFCW/15/08)**
- 15. **April to September 2014 accruals based management accounts report 2014-15 (HEFCW/15/09)**
- 16. **SETQ Committee Annual Report 2013/14 (HEFCW/15/10)**
- 17. **Minutes (unconfirmed) of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, 5 November 2014 (HEFCW/15/11)**
- 18. **HR Committee minutes, 5 November 2014 (HEFCW/15/12)**