
Minutes of the 188th meeting of the Council held on 17 May 2018 at the HEFCW office, Bedwas

Present:

Members:

David Allen (Chair)
Dr David Blaney (Chief Executive)
Professor Aaqil Ahmed
James Davies
Sarah John
Professor Helen Marshall
David Mason
Professor Mark Smith (by telephone)
Professor Robin Williams

Observers:

David Sweeney, Executive Chair, Research England
Huw Morris, Welsh Government
Alison Bryant, Welsh Government
Carmen Smith, Acting President, National Union of Students
Wales
Gwyneth Sweatman, Women's Officer and President-elect, NUS
Wales

Officers:

Dale Hall (Council Secretary)
Celia Hunt
Bethan Owen
Emma Raczka
Linda Tiller (item 11)
Angela West
Nick Williams

Apologies:

Professor Sir Keith Burnett
Lesley Davies (post-meeting note: Lesley Davies subsequently indicated her intention to resign from the Council owing to pressure of work)
Professor Christine Ennew
Dr John Kemp, Interim Chief Executive, SFC

1. Introductory remarks and declarations of interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Professor Robin Williams noted with respect to item 7.2 that he would be preparing a response to the post-compulsory education and training (PCET) Technical Consultation on behalf of the Learned Society of Wales. No other specific members' interests were declared in relation to any of today's agenda items above and beyond those currently published on HEFCW's website.

- 1.2 The Chair welcomed new Council member Professor Aaqil Ahmed, Professor of Media at the University of Bolton and former Head of Religion and Ethics at BBC and Channel 4, who had been appointed to the Council from April. Two further new members had been appointed to the Council from April, but unfortunately had had to send their apologies for today's meeting:
 - Lesley Davies, CEO and Principal, Trafford College
 - Professor Christine Ennew, Provost, University of Warwick.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:
 - Carmen Smith, Acting NUS Wales President
 - Gwyneth Sweatman, Women's Officer and President-elect, NUS Wales
 - Angela West, who had recently joined HEFCW staff as Skills and Employability Manager
- 1.4 The Council would consider at its July meeting a proposed timetable of Council meetings for 2019. In view of recent changes to Council membership, the Council Secretary would seek members' views on preferred days and times of future Council meetings.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2018 (HEFCW/18/Min187)

- 2.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 21 March 2018.

3. Matters Arising (HEFCW/18/37)

- 3.1 *Extension of the GO Wales: Achieve Through Work Experience programme* – The extension of the GO Wales operation had also been confirmed for West Wales and the Valleys.
- 3.2 *HEFCW funding: additional £3m for enhancing HE-FE collaboration* – A seminar recently had been held at the HEFCW office for HE and FE institutions at which HEFCW's expectations for the funding had been clarified, including with respect to the need for good levels of co-operation between institutions in their respective regions. The seminar had provided a welcome networking opportunity.

4. Chair's Report (HEFCW/18/CH3)

- 4.1 The Chair had attended the 'Friends of HEFCE' farewell reception at the House of Lords in March, and had written to the outgoing Chair to express thanks for all that HEFCE had achieved and contributed to UK higher education.
- 4.2 The Chair, Chair of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee (RIEC) and the Chief Executive had held a positive meeting in April with the new Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales, Professor Peter Halligan. Professor Halligan placed emphasis on the advisory aspects of the role, and stated that his philosophy was based around science for a purpose, and as a means to achieving positive societal ends. He saw HEFCW as having an important role to play in pressing forward the science agenda in Wales.

- 4.3 The Chair was scheduled to meet this afternoon with the Welsh Government's Director General – Economy, Skills and Natural Resources, Andrew Slade.
- 4.4 The Chair gave an update on the outcome of his recent conversations with members about revisions to the Council membership of the Council's various committees.

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

Exempt minute

The Council Secretary would send a follow-up email to all members to confirm latest committee membership and to provide an updated timetable of all confirmed committee meeting dates.

- 4.5 The Chair expressed on behalf of the Council thanks to all HEFCW staff for the high quality of their work and support. As the organisation moved into a time of uncertainty around the PCET proposals, he sought assurances from Welsh Government that HEFCW staff would be treated equitably in terms of consultation and information sharing about PCET developments. The Welsh Government observer (HM) replied that, as Welsh Government moved into the implementation phase of the developments, this is exactly what was intended. He said the Welsh Government took very seriously its duty of care for staff.

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

4.6 Exempt minute

5. Update from Chairs of Council Committees (HEFCW/18/CC3)

- 5.1 SOAC had met on 9 May, chaired by David Blaney. The Committee had had strategic discussions on the 2018-19 remit letter; the PCET Technical Consultation; and HEFCW's consultation on developing a set of sector measures. There were strong contributions from around the table which would inform the executive's further work in all these areas.
- 5.2 None of the Council's other committees had met since the last Council meeting. The Chair of QAC noted that the committee was looking for new independent members and was considering a number of applications.

[David Sweeney arrived at the meeting.]

6. Update on Research England

- 6.1 David Sweeney, the Executive Chair of recently created Research England, was welcomed to the meeting. David had attended the HEFCW Council previously as a representative of HEFCE, and this was his first HEFCW Council meeting since taking on the new role. Council noted that HEFCW and Research England had agreed reciprocal observer status on each other's boards.

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

6.2 Exempt minute

6.3 Exempt minute

6.4 Exempt minute

7. Chief Executive's Report (HEFCW/18/CE3)

The Chief Executive commented for the benefit of new members that his report was used to report to the Council items which were not sufficiently detailed to justify a full Council paper; issues not yet fully formed or developed; or matters that had arisen relatively last minute. For these reasons, the Report sometimes included a fairly large number of items.

7.1 Reflection on Council Workshop, 16 May 2018

A range of issues had been covered in the Workshop discussions, including UK developments and their potential impact on Wales; the PCET technical consultation; future funding policy options; and an update on the next phase of the sector measures consultation. Members also had received a useful presentation from NUS Wales on its recent achievements and future work plan, and found it helpful to discuss with them the student perspective on issues such as PCET. It had been welcomed to be reminded of the key matters of importance with respect to the needs and interests of students.

Members welcomed the space afforded by Workshops to engage in larger strategic issues outwith the constraints of a formal meeting. It was suggested, however, that sometimes too much was packed into Workshop agendas.

7.2 Tertiary Education and Research Commission for Wales: technical consultation

7.2.1 Council shared its initial thoughts on the PCET technical consultation document. A proposed draft response to the consultation would be brought to the Council's next meeting in July.

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

7.2.2 Exempt minute

7.2.3 Exempt minute

7.2.4 Exempt minute

7.2.5 Exempt minute

7.2.6 Exempt minute

7.2.7 Exempt minute

7.2.8 Exempt minute

7.2.9 Exempt minute

7.3 Exempt minute

7.4 Subject-level TEF

Council agreed that HEFCW should respond to the Department for Education's technical consultation on subject-level TEF, not least as there were some Welsh HE institutions involved in the pilots.

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

7.5 Exempt minute

7.6 Exempt minute

7.7 Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee: revised terms of reference

Resolved: The Council agreed the revised RIEC terms of reference, and delegated authority to the Chair, the incoming Chair of RIEC (MS) and the Chief Executive to approve the final version following discussion by the Committee at its next meeting on 24 May.

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

7.8 Exempt minute

7.9 Longitudinal Outcomes Survey (LEO) update

The executive's view was that LEO data, which had been published by the Department for Education for all UK HEIs, could be misleading to prospective students if published on Unistats: it was currently experimental and lacked appropriate contextual information, including benchmarks. It was not required that Welsh LEO data be published on Unistats, but ultimately it would be up to the Welsh sector to determine if it wished to participate. If it was decided not to publish, HEFCW would add explanatory text to the Unistats site to explain the absence of Welsh data. Council was supportive of officers' position on this issue.

7.10 Council received and noted a number of items for information:

- Chief Executive's Calendar of Meetings since the last meeting of Council on 21 March 2018. Noted one addition to the calendar: the Chair had attended the launch event for UKRI on 14 May.
- Correspondence with The Open University *Non-disclosable (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs)*
- Letter from HEFCW on assurance on sharing of matters of potential interest with Research Councils UK, 19 April 2018
- Note of Institutional Visit to Cardiff Metropolitan University *Non-disclosable*

8. Remit Letter and Operational Plan 2018-19 (HEFCW/18/38)

8.1 The paper provided an analysis of HEFCW's remit letter for 2018-19 and presented a draft operational plan 2018-19. Council noted the key areas covered by the remit letter, including that, for the first time, HEFCW had been

asked to provide a separate report at the end of the year setting out how it had addressed remit letter tasks.

- 8.2 Council welcomed the positive tone of the remit letter and that it thanked the Council for its work. On paragraph 14.1 of the remit letter on well-being matters, it was noted that student mental health issues had been raised at the last SOAC meeting. It was intended that proposals on addressing this area within a broader well-being approach would be brought to a future Council meeting.

Resolved: The Council

- 8.3 Noted the remit letter 2018-19 and the draft operational plan 2018-19.
- 8.4 Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the draft operational plan for submission to the Cabinet Secretary by 31 July.

9. HEFCW funding allocations 2018/19 (HEFCW/18/39)

- 9.1 Based on the steers provided by Council at its meeting in January 2018, the paper set out specific proposals for the distribution of funding for the AY 2018/19 and the allocations for individual institutions. A revised version of Table 1 attached to the paper was tabled at the meeting.

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: The Council

- 9.5 Confirmed the overall allocation of funding for AY 2018/19 as set out in Table 1.

9.6 Exempt minute

9.7 Exempt minute

9.8 Exempt minute

9.9 Exempt minute

9.10 Exempt minute

9.11 Exempt minute

9.12 Exempt minute

9.13 Exempt minute

9.14 Exempt minute

- 9.15 Exempt minute
- 9.16 Exempt minute
- 9.17 Exempt minute
- 9.18 Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to adjust the payment profiles if necessary to ensure adequate cash management within our operational constraints.
- 9.19 Delegated authority to the Chair and Chief Executive to agree the final allocations of grant to institutions for AY 2018/19.
- 9.20 Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to agree the final communication of allocations of grant to institutions for AY 2018/19.

10. WISERD education project outcomes and evaluation (HEFCW/18/40)

- 10.1 Council received the final report on HEFCW funding for WISERDeducation; the outcomes of the external evaluation; and Welsh Government's response to the evaluation recommendations.
- 10.2 HEFCW's funding for this project had been made over six years. The funding had now ended, though there remained some pockets of funding for dissemination. Overall, success in the project had been mixed, though a distinctly positive outcome had been that, following zero education submissions from Wales in the 2008 RAE, the intervention of the WISERDeducation project led to successes in REF2014, with Cardiff University coming out 5th in UK on education research. The external evaluation conducted by the University of Oxford commented that HEFCW had probably tried to achieve too much for the level of funding provided.

Resolved: The Council

- 10.3 Noted the final report on the HEFCW-funded WISERDeducation
- 10.4 Noted the outcomes of the WISERDeducation evaluation.
- 10.5 Noted Welsh Government's response to the evaluation recommendations.

11. Global Challenges Research Fund: approval of institutional strategies (HEFCW/18/41)

- 11.1 The paper invited the Council to approve institutions' three-year strategies for the use of Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) allocations, and also the revised allocations for 2018/19.

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

- 11.2 Exempt minute
- 11.3 The Research England observer (DS) commended the quality and clarity of the paper.

- Resolved: The Council:
- 11.4 Approved institutions' GCRF strategies.
- 11.5 Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to approve for resubmission any strategies which required amendment.
- 11.6 Approved increased GCRF allocations for 2018/19 as set out at Annex A.
- 12. Proposal for match funded Learning Analytics work and outcome of Jisc evaluation of e-learning strategy (HEFCW/18/42)**

12.1 The paper presented the outcome of the review of the 10 year strategy for Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology (ELTT) in Wales, and provided information on a project on learning analytics to be funded jointly by HEFCW and institutions. The Council thanked the Head of Student Experience for her foresight over 10 years ago in setting this initiative in train.

12.2 Council welcomed that the Jisc evaluation of the strategy was very positive and highlighted as a strength the embedded approaches being adopted by Welsh institutions. It had been proposed that the next stage include HE institutions working towards adopting learning analytics.

12.3 The project outcomes would be disseminated via Jisc Digifest, and also possibly through another launch event, as not all institutions used Jisc Learning Analytics. NUS Wales welcomed the project outcomes and the proposed new work.

Resolved: The Council:

12.4 Noted the outcomes of the review of the ELTT strategy, including the views of the Student Opportunity and Achievement Committee (SOAC).

12.5 Agreed that HEFCW should match fund participation of Welsh institutions in the Jisc Learning Analytics work to take forward the outcomes of the ELTT review, and approved £266k for HEFCW's contribution to this work over a two year period.

13. Any other business
None.

14. Date of next meetings:

- 11 July 2018 - Institutional Visit to Cardiff University
- 12 July 2018 - Council meeting

Papers provided for information:

- 15. Welsh Language Scheme Annual Compliance Report (HEFCW/18/43)**
- 16. Operational Plan 2017-18: End of Year Report (HEFCW/18/44)**
- 17. UK Healthcare Education Advisory Committee Annual report (HEFCW/18/45)**

18. Appointments Committee Annual Report 2017-18 (HEFCW/18/46)

19. Sêr Cymru programme – progress update (HEFCW/18/47)

Signature.....Date.....