

## Minutes of the 191<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Council held on 15 November 2018 at the HEFCW office, Bedwas

### Present:

#### Members:

David Allen (Chair)  
Dr David Blaney (Chief Executive)  
Professor Aaqil Ahmed  
Professor Sir Keith Burnett  
James Davies  
Professor Christine Ennew  
Dr John Graystone  
Rob Humphreys  
Sarah John  
Professor Helen Marshall  
David Mason  
Professor Mark Smith

#### Observers:

Alison Bryant, Welsh Government  
Colette Eley, Welsh Government  
Gwyneth Sweatman, President, National Union of Students Wales

#### Officers:

Dale Hall (Council Secretary)  
Celia Hunt  
Seema Khanom  
Bethan Owen  
Diane Rowland  
Nick Williams

#### Apologies:

David Sweeney, Executive Chair, Research England  
Dr John Kemp, Interim Chief Executive, SFC  
Huw Morris, Welsh Government  
Chris Jones, Welsh Government

### 1. HR Committee Minutes of the meeting of 12 July 2018 and Committee Annual Report 2017-18 (HEFCW/18/83): Members only

- 1.1 Council considered and discussed the annual report on HR activities and the draft revised remit of the HR Committee. In considering the annual report, members explored arrangements for professional development, the provision of 'flu jabs, staff turnover, the carry-forward of annual leave and the implications for staff of the current Welsh Government plans to replace HEFCW with a new arm's length body with a remit across the whole of post compulsory education in Wales. Members questioned the section on religious affiliation since it did not

provide an opportunity to specify faiths other than Christian except in general terms.

- 1.2 In considering and approving the revised remit for the HR Committee, members suggested that, as part of the planned governance review of the Council and its committees in 2019, consideration should be given to adjusting the quorum of the HR Committee to require the attendance of an independent member at meetings.

Resolved: The Council:

- 1.3 Noted the annual HR report, subject to the comments at the meeting.
- 1.4 Agreed the revised HR Committee remit.

## **2. Introductory remarks and declarations of interest**

1. The Chair welcomed the observers to the meeting.
- 2.2 Members' interests:
  - Professor Sir Keith Burnett noted that he was a Non-executive Director of Study Group International plc.
  - Rob Humphreys noted that he was a former employee of the Open University in Wales, but no longer had any associations with the institution.
  - David Allen reminded Council as previously noted (in connection with any external facilitation of the Council governance review) that, as a sole trader, with the Halpin Partnership or as an Associate of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (now part of Advance HE) he occasionally undertook governance reviews, but never in Wales.

No further members' interests were noted in relation to any of today's agenda items above and beyond those currently declared and published on HEFCWs' website.

## **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2018 (HEFCW/18/Min190)**

- 3.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 20 September 2018.

## **4. Matters Arising (HEFCW/18/84)**

***Non-disclosable (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs)***

4.1 Exempt minute).

4.2 Exempt minute

- 4.3 Council requested that future Matters Arising reports include more specific dates in the 'Timetable' column, rather than 'in progress'.

## **5. Chair's Report (HEFCW/18/CH6)**

- 5.1 The Chair noted that this was Celia Hunt's last Council meeting before her retirement. He thanked Celia on behalf of the Council for nearly 24 years of

outstanding work and service to HEFCW and to the student body in Wales. Council members expressed their best wishes to Celia for her retirement.

The Chair also noted that Linda Tiller, Senior Research Manager, would be retiring from HEFCW in January 2019. Linda had been HEFCW's research expert with respect to the Research Assessment Exercises and the subsequent Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercises. The Council expressed their thanks and best wishes to Linda for her retirement.

- 5.2 The Chair had written on behalf of the Council to Professor Richard Davies to thank him for his many years' service to Swansea University, following the recent announcement that he would be retiring at the end of this academic year. The Chair had also written a thank you letter to Neil Surman following his recent departure from the Higher Education Division of Welsh Government.

**Non-disclosable (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs)**

5.3 Exempt minute

5.4 Exempt minute

**Non-disclosable (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs; commercial interests)**

5.5 Exempt minute

**6. Update from Chairs of Council Committees (HEFCW/18/CC6)**

**Non-disclosable (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs)**

6.1 Exempt minute

6.2 Exempt minute

6.3 Exempt minute

6.4 Exempt minute

6.5 Exempt minute

6.6 Exempt minute

**7. Chief Executive's Report (HEFCW/18/CE6)**

7.1 Reflection on discussions at Council Workshop, 14 November

Council members commented that the Workshop had provided a very useful space for broader, more open discussion on a range of important matters. The Chair invited members to put forward any proposals for further improving Council Workshops.

**Non-disclosable (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs; commercial interests; information provided in confidence)**

7.2.1 Exempt minute

7.2.2 Exempt minute

7.2.3 Exempt minute

7.2.4 Exempt minute

7.3 Exempt minute

7.4 Institutional Visit to the Open University in Wales, 23 January 2019

*Resolved: The Council*

7.4.1 Exempt minute

7.4.2 Exempt minute

**Non-disclosable (prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs)**

7.5 Higher Education Conference 2019

Exempt minute

7.6 Unistats re-development: next stage

**Non-disclosable (for future publication)**

*Resolved: The Council*

7.6.1 Exempt minute

7.6.2 Exempt minute

7.7 2021 REF budget

*Resolved:* The Council approved the revised budget for HEFCW's contribution to the costs of the 2021 REF.

7.8 Amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Student Opportunity and Achievement Committee (SOAC)

*Resolved:* The Council approved the proposed changes to the membership of SOAC as set out within its terms of reference.

7.9 The Reaching Wider (RW) Programme

**Non-disclosable (for future publication)**

*Resolved: The Council*

Exempt minute

Exempt minute

7.10 Council received a number of items for information:

- Chief Executive's Calendar of Meetings since the last meeting of Council on 20 September 2018.
- *Review of Conservatoire and Performing Arts Provision In Wales* (Murphy Review) and the Cabinet Secretary's Statement
- Balanced Funding Working Group
- Update on the Wise Wales project
- Update on HESA Data Futures Programme

- Nominations Committee actions

*The Chair took agenda item 11. at this point (see minute below).*

## **8. Corporate Strategy 2017-20 progress report and analysis of performance against HEFCW Corporate Strategy targets 2013-17 (HEFCW/18/85)**

- 8.1 The paper attached at Annex A provided the first progress report to the Council against the 12 HEFCW performance outcomes in the Corporate Strategy 2017-20. The paper also provided an analysis of the sector's performance on the targets included in HEFCW's former Corporate Strategy.

### **Non-disclosable (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs)**

8.2 Exempt minute

8.3 Exempt minute

8.4 Exempt minute

8.5 Exempt minute

Resolved: The Council

- 8.6 Received the first report on progress against the HEFCW performance outcomes to be delivered by 2020, as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2017-20.

- 8.7 Noted the performance against the former Corporate Strategy 2013-17 targets.

### **Non-disclosable (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs)**

8.8 Exempt minute

## **9. Update on 2019/20 budget announcement and review of future funding (HEFCW/18/86)**

- 9.1 The Council noted the following key points from the paper:

- The draft financial year (FY) budget figures for 2019-20 were in line with expectations on funding for that year, however the final figures for the year would not be confirmed until the Council's meeting in January.
- There was as yet no indication of the potential funding available for FY 2020-21, but Welsh Government officials had indicated that HEFCW's assumptions about funding for that year were reasonable for the purpose of early modelling for academic year (AY) 2019/20. The executive would continue to seek assurances from Welsh Government about these assumptions as it continued to develop the modelling for AY 2019/20 funding.
- Consistent with previous steers from the Council, it had been proposed in the recent funding consultation exercise that any additional funding available for AY 2019/20 (which currently appeared to be in the region of £5m) would be focussed on supporting subjects falling under the expensive subjects premium (ESP) up to the equivalent levels elsewhere in the UK, with the

remaining funding directed at other higher cost provision, informed by the TRAC(T) approach. Broadly, the feedback received through the consultation exercise was supportive of the proposals.

**Non-disclosable (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs)**

9.2 Exempt minute

Resolved: The Council

9.3 Received the financial year 2019-20 draft budget published by the Welsh Government on 23 October, noting that it was the same as the assumptions made for modelling purposes (with the addition of Degree Apprenticeship and Global Wales ring-fenced funding), and that there was no indicative FY 2020-21 budget.

9.4 Noted the responses to the initial funding consultation, and agreed that it provided a mandate for officers to proceed as outlined for academic year (AY) 2019/20, and to carry out further modelling and further consultation for AY 2020/21 and beyond.

**Non-disclosable (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs)**

9.5 Exempt minute

**10. Fee and Access Planning Guidance 2020/21 and draft Advance HE review report (HEFCW/18/87)**

10.1 The paper presented the draft recommendations of a review by Advance HE of the past three years of fee and access planning and progress, to inform guidance currently under development for 2020/21 fee and access plans. The Advance HE report was very detailed and operational, and the executive believed would be helpful in informing the next set of fee and access plan guidance. The report would be considered at the first meeting of the Regulation Committee in December.

Resolved: The Council

10.2 Noted Advance HE's draft overarching themes and recommendations.

10.3 Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the fee and access plan guidance once the Regulation Committee Chair was content the Committee's comments had been considered.

**11. Well-being and health in higher education, including supporting student mental health (HEFCW/18/88)**

11.1 The paper provided a draft HEFCW Strategic Approach to Well-being and Health in Higher Education; a draft action plan to support student mental health in higher education; and a request for funding of proposals to support student mental health in higher education. HEFCW had issued guidance on mental health issues in 2013, since when numerous initiatives and guidance had been developed (these were summarised in Annex A to the paper).

**Non-disclosable (for future publication; prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs; commercial interests; information provided in confidence)**

11.2 Exempt minute

11.3 Exempt minute

11.4 Exempt minute

Resolved: The Council

11.5 Noted the Wales and UK policy and developments in supporting well-being and health in HE, including mental health.

11.6 Supported HEFCW's draft Strategic Approach to Well-being and Health in HE and supporting student mental health in HE draft action plan.

11.7 Provided further steers and advice on the proposals for supporting well-being and health, including student mental health, in HE (minute 11.4 refers).

11.8 Approved total funding of £300k in 2018/19 for supporting students with mental health in HE.

11.9 Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to finalise guidance, funding and allocations to support satisfactory proposals to enhance student mental health in higher education.

**12. Annual review of key Council governance documents (HEFCW/18/89)**

Resolved: The Council

12.1 Approved the proposed amendments to the *Standing Orders* and to the *Code of Conduct for Members of HEFCW* [Post meeting note: In discussion with the Chair, it has been agreed that, consistent with the agreed process for identifying chairs of committees, the first option proposed in the revised Standing Orders for approving a Deputy Chair would be adopted – namely, that the Deputy Chair would be identified by the Chair in consultation with other Council members.]

12.2 Noted the annual report on the application of the Council's official seal.

12.3 Agreed to commission an external review of the Council's governance arrangements, guided by a steering group comprising two or three Council members (excluding the Chair and current Deputy Chair) and two or three officers, including the Council Secretary, to report back to the Council at the end of 2019.

**13. Any other business**

None.

**14. Date of next meeting**

14.1 23 January 2019: Annual Public Meeting and Institutional Visit to the Open University in Wales.

14.2 24 January 2019: Council meeting.

**Papers for approval without discussion:**

**15. HEFCW Corporate Risk Register and Issues Log (HEFCW/18/90)**

Resolved: The Council received and approved:

- 15.1 The latest update to the Corporate Risk Register (Annex Ai) and details of the distribution of those risks.
- 15.2 The latest HEFCW Issues Log (Annex B).
- 15.3 The list of Horizon Scanning issues that may have an impact on HEFCW's future risk position.

**Papers provided for information:**

**16. Analysis of institutions' financial health based on latest forecasts (HEFCW/18/91)**

**17. Operational Plan 2018-19 Q1 & Q2 update (HEFCW/18/92)**

**18. Jisc annual report 2017/18 (HEFCW/18/93)**

**19. QAC annual assurance and minutes of the meeting held 5 October 2018 (HEFCW/18/94)**

**20. Meeting of the Council's Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee held on 12 October 2018 and Annual Report 2017/18 (HEFCW/18/95)**

**21. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 17 October 2018 (HEFCW/18/96)**

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