

STRATEGY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH EAST WALES

2011/12 to 2013/14



A Vision, and aims and objectives, for the strategy

Context for the South East Wales Higher Education Strategy

The South East Region is the power house for Wales. It has the largest population base, the capital city, and the largest economic output of the regions. The Capital City–Region acts as a magnet for learners, employers and inward investment. It is therefore not surprising that the South East Region has the largest higher education (HE) presence and the largest graduate output of the three regions. However, these strengths must not be allowed to mask the significant challenges faced at sub-regional level. Many of Wales' areas of highest deprivation in terms of economy, health and education are located within the South East. This Strategy must therefore seek both to maintain and develop the strengths of the South East and to address the severe challenges for the benefit of both the Region and Wales.

The Universities and the Further Education Colleges providing HE within the Region have significant breadth and depth in teaching portfolio and delivery modes to cater for the wide range of learner interests and needs. Many also play important all-Wales' roles in ensuring that excellent teaching, research and knowledge transfer activities in high cost niche and professional disciplines can be sustained on a cost effective basis. The national role played by the Region's universities and the effect of the Capital City 'pull' give good reason for the higher concentration of students within the South East.

The South East is already globally competitive both as a HE sector and as a Region, benefiting from internationally excellent research and being an attractive location for overseas students providing multi-cultural learning environments for all students. All the universities are actively engaged in knowledge transfer activities, ensuring that HE positively impacts on other sectors of the economy and society. As a sector HE is one of the top industries within this Region with a turnover of ca. M£700 in 2009/10. Higher education therefore contributes substantially to the South East Region and to the whole of Wales – economically, socially and culturally.

The South East Regional Stakeholders¹ asked that this Higher Education Strategy take forward:

- HE as a key regional driver for economic and social progression;
- the Universities and FE Colleges 'speaking with one voice' to remove the confusion among learners and employers of the routes into the HE provision available within the region; and
- the wider role of the South East region in delivering for all of Wales and establishing Wales' place in the world.

This Strategy therefore takes forward the HE providers' commitment to generating further opportunities for learners and employers within the South East and within the whole of Wales.

¹ A South East Regional Stakeholder Event was held on 20 October 2010.

Vision

Together, acting either collaboratively or individually and to our strengths, the HE providers within South East Wales will:

- Be responsive to the needs of learners and employers within SE Wales;
- Deliver a pan-Wales or cross-regional role in areas of expertise for the wider benefit of Wales;
- Widen access to higher education;
- Act as catalysts for economic growth;
- Increase and build on the benefits of national/international links to the region;
- Promote the value of HE to the individual, the region and to Wales.

In order to:

- Enhance social justice; and
- Support a buoyant economy

Aims & Objectives

*For **learners***, a higher education system where:

- Those who are able may benefit from higher education irrespective of background;
- The learning experience is of a high quality;
- Graduates are equipped for the world of work and their roles as citizens.

The outcomes will be:

- Increased participation through innovative approaches to increasingly flexible provision, including more opportunities for part-time study;
- Better access to the professions;
- Enhanced progression to and through higher education (full and part-time) via better connectivity;
- Enhanced Welsh Medium provision
- Students, both home and international, are attracted to the region;
- Increasing numbers of students successfully complete their learning objectives;
- A greater proportion of the population achieves higher level skills;
- Employability is a key outcome of the higher education experience.

*For **businesses***, a higher education system where:

- Research performance underpins world class excellence and supports the knowledge economy alongside cultural and social renewal;
- Employers are supported in their efforts to innovate and bring business growth to the region;
- There are productive relationships between higher education providers and organisations in the public and private sectors.

The outcomes, working with employers, will be:

- Current and new businesses are attracted to the region because of the quality of the links with the higher education providers;
- There are increased employment opportunities for graduates;

- Graduates are attracted to the region;
- There is continuous development of high level skills in the workforce via flexible and diverse modes of delivery;
- The economy is supported by strengthened and systematic knowledge transfer;
- Increasing inward-investment into the region.

For the **higher education providers**, a higher education system where:

- There is ongoing collaboration and dialogue to ensure regional needs are met;
- Beneficial collaboration brings competitive advantage and healthy competition ensures value for money;
- There is engagement with the transformation agenda, and partnerships between HE and HE and between HE and FE are developed in the interests of learners and informed by the plans for education and upskilling in the constituent local authorities;
- Working together increases the impact of our activities for the benefit of society and the economy in Wales and more widely.

The outcomes will be:

- Globally competitive higher education that can respond to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century;
- Enhanced accessible provision for learners through the development of shared academic provision;
- Increased efficiency;
- Enhanced financial viability;
- A more coherent HE sector of different providers with different strengths and different missions, working to complement and enhance their individual strengths and missions.

B Current HE Provision Within the Region

Context

The higher education (HE) provision delivered in SE Wales needs to be understood in several contexts:

- its role within the region in meeting employment needs and facilitating social inclusion;
- in certain areas of provision, the pan-Wales role played by SE Wales HE providers; and
- its role as a magnet for UK and international student recruitment and intellectual capital, for the betterment of the SE Wales region and Wales.

Whilst there is a balance to be struck between the regional, Wales, UK and international dimensions of each HE provider's mission, these combine in a complementary fashion for the benefit of regional interests.

A further contextual factor that needs to be taken into account in any evaluation of HE provision is that the individual disciplines delivered by each provider exist within a wider academic undertaking. Most visibly, taught provision is integral to a

university's ability to engage in research, knowledge transfer and innovation and engagement activities. Like taught provision, these activities also have regional, Wales, UK and international dimensions, with UK and international activity benefiting the SE Wales region. Any change to the distribution of taught provision across SE Wales providers needs to be evaluated in the context of the impact that this would have on the wider academic footprint of individual institutions and whether this would be beneficial for regional stakeholders.

Overview of taught provision delivered in SE Wales

At the macro level, the pattern of HE provision delivered in SE Wales is similar to that of the UK. While there are no fundamental imbalances in the broad subject mix, the individual institutions within the Region are aware of where there are important differences between the SE Wales and UK profiles and will take these into account when planning their academic portfolios.

55% of student FTEs studying in Wales are located in SE Wales and the region has over 50% of student FTEs in Wales for 12 of 18 subject areas. 82% of student FTEs study at undergraduate level, a significant minority of these studying part-time. 18% of student FTEs are postgraduates.

SE Wales is successful at recruiting students from within its region whilst continuing to attract UK and international students:

- 43% of student FTEs are domiciled in the region
- 12% of student FTEs are domiciled elsewhere in Wales
- 29% of student FTEs are domiciled in the rest of the UK
- 16% of student FTEs are domiciled overseas.

While macro level evidence supports a conclusion that SE Wales is successful in providing provision to people domiciled within the region, this needs to be tempered in the knowledge that there are imbalances in participation across the region – for example, the unitary authorities of Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Torfaen all experience a participation rate in HE that is lower than average for Wales, and there are instances of very low participation in specific Communities First areas, including the inner city wards.

Furthermore commentators believe that demographic and economic change will give rise to greater demand for HE from 'mature' students, flexible forms of study, and a variety of progression routes. 39% of the region's HE students are 25 years or older and 35% are studying part-time and the Region is already responding the increased need for more flexible delivery and is offering increased provision through non-traditional means across a broad range of disciplines. This provision includes community based lifelong learning, Open University distance learning, flexible part time undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision and professional development. The region will continue to respond to these and other strategic drivers.

Process for Review of Provision at Regional Level

In 2010/11 a detailed audit was undertaken. A range of data, encompassing but not restricted to course level and module level information, informed the audit of

provision. The data included: information supplied by HEFCW; a variety of analyses provided by the Francis Group/Office of Public Management Team (HEFCW appointed consultants); and, locally-held information. Additionally, the region benefited from information arising from the detailed evaluation undertaken by each provider individually in relation to the health and 'currency' of its taught portfolio.

Additional datasets were commissioned from HESA and these are supporting the development of the Strategy over time by enabling the region to probe modular dimensions and employability facets in more detail.

Areas of provision that were delivered by more than one provider were evaluated to ascertain whether duplication existed and, in instances of duplication, whether duplication was desirable or necessary, e.g. where it was clear through different average UCAS tariff scores, domicile of their students or different delivery modes that institutions recruit from different student markets.

The comprehensive redistribution activity undertaken in the region during 2010/11 as a result of the audit undertaken has facilitated much reduced duplication of provision and enhanced differentiation between HE providers in South East Wales. Of particular significance has been the realisation of greater differentiation between providers in the discipline areas of Creative Arts and Design and Social Studies, consolidation in the regionally identified priority areas of Biomedical Sciences and Health Related provision and also in the area of Computing.

The Region is confident that there are no further areas of unnecessary duplication. The Region believes that HEFCW's long-standing redistribution process is an appropriate mechanism to facilitate transfers in future years should this be deemed desirable or necessary.

C Identification of key progression routes

Progression routes to higher education within the Region have been analysed on both a regional and sub-regional basis and a high-level summary of key routes is included below.

Key Progression Routes from Post-16 to HE in SE Wales

The main form of progression from post-16 (school sixth forms and FE colleges) to HE is from A-level (or equivalent) into full-time degree study. This represents a high percentage of progression into undergraduate full-time provision.

Student data has been analysed and the Region is aware of where students are moving out of the Region to study and we will explore whether we can ascertain whether this is generally through choice or necessity.

The Region will engage with the HEFCW-commissioned project to map progression from FE to HE with the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and Colegau Cymru. The Region will review and consider the

recommendations coming out of this work following receipt of the final report in March 2012.

Progression routes from post-16 to HE are well established in the Region and include articulation arrangements from FE colleges to HE institutions. Many of these are encompassed within formal partnership arrangements such as UWIC's FE2HE Consortium and UHOVI.

UHOVI is a major project within the Region which will address progression priorities by providing access locally (in the Heads of the Valleys area) to a range of HE courses designed to improve qualifications and skills. It is combining flexible and innovative delivery with tailored support for non-standard learners and is working closely with further education and training providers, Local Authorities, businesses, schools and the voluntary sector.

It delivers full and part time Foundation degrees, work based learning and bite size learning in the following key priority areas, thereby enhancing progression routes:

- Business Development;
- Community Development and Voluntary Sector;
- Creative and Cultural Industries;
- Public Services, Health and Education;
- Sport and Leisure;
- Technology, Engineering and Science

The primary model of UHOVI delivery is where the HEIs validate Foundation Degrees which are subsequently offered at the four FECs within the partnership. Over time it is envisaged that each two year Foundation Degree will have a third year degree option available on which to progress. This option will be offered at either Merthyr Learning Quarter or the Learning Zone (Ebbw Vale), thereby providing residents of the Heads of the Valleys with the opportunity to undertake a degree within their local community that is taught by highly experienced and qualified academics. Should students at the end of their Foundation Degree desire to attend another university within South Wales or beyond then as long as the HEI recognizes the Foundation Degree in terms of it satisfying the entry criteria then opportunity exists. Given that Foundation Degrees are an accepted currency across the sector, this should not be problematic.

The following have been put in place to facilitate enhanced progression in the UHOVI area:

- More flexible entry requirements to allow non-traditional learners to participate;
- Direct applications (not through UCAS) to remove a potential barrier;
- Portability between programmes to address learner needs and changing skill profiles;
- Structures that enable seamless provision and progression;
- A sign-posting service to provide appropriate information and guidance;

- Increasing local access to a greater range of higher education courses.

Distance learning pathways are also used in supporting the CQFW Level 3 to 4 transitions for part-time students via a suite of 10 and 15 credit **Openings** modules offered by the Open University. These are designed to support access to undergraduate qualifications, often after subsequently completing a distance learning CQFW Level 4 60 credit Undergraduate Certificate or 120 credit Certificate in higher Education.

In addition the OU's distance learning pathways offer discrete Foundation Degree top-up routes to a 'named' Bachelors degree (these are in addition to the more flexible Foundation Degree top-up arrangements within the Open Degree. Similar arrangements exist to top-up HNC/HND qualifications to an Open degree – BA or BSc.

Key Progression Routes from Work Based Learning (WBL) Provision to HE in SE Wales

The Region is looking to increase the range and volume of work-based provision so that it more appropriately addresses employer, market and learner need as well as the wider regional needs for workforce development. The new Foundation Degree provision agreed in 2010/11 will contribute significantly to this aim.

The UHOVI has a prominent role in the provision of work-related/based learning in the Region and is building capability at higher level skills (level 4+). In its work-based learning provision staff training and development is tailored to meet the needs of industry in the Region thus providing a better skilled workforce to boost the local economy.

In responding to the challenges of widening access in the workplace, the Open University in Wales has continued to prioritise support of trade union facilitated access to HE in the Region through its unique partnership with the UNISON, the Wales TUC and a range of other trade unions.

The individual institutions within the Region continually communicate and liaise with employers and areas have been identified to address regional employer needs. Work is already ongoing within the institutions to improve progression routes from work based learning to HE, such as:

- The Capital Centre for Work-based Learning (CCWL), a collaborative venture based at UWIC which enables researchers, practitioners and policy workers to share knowledge and approaches to developing employer engagement;
- Network75 at University of Glamorgan which allows students to combine work and study thereby enabling them to gain academic knowledge and practical experience making them industry-ready graduates;
- The Professional Academy at University of Glamorgan and UWIC's Centre for Personal and Professional Development which engage with companies in a variety of sectors to up-skill employees through bite-sized learning opportunities;

- Cardiff University's links with the Office for National Statistics particularly at postgraduate level;
- The wide range of professionally accredited courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level across the Region

The Region also has strong links with employers and employer representatives including SEWEF and the Sector Skills Councils.

Key Progression Routes from HE to HE in SE Wales

There are growing opportunities for progression from HE to HE in the Region especially in terms of progression from Foundation Degree to level 6 top-up. At University of Newport, for example, curriculum design includes preparation for dissertation work for all students in anticipation of this progression. At Newport there is a high level of progression from HND Engineering and Business programmes to appropriate degrees.

Franchised out provision and HE in FE agreements also contribute to HE to HE progression pathways, with a good number of students already progressing to a degree at the host university.

There are some examples of shared or joint delivery with structured progression – the progression agreement between Cardiff and University of Glamorgan which allows a small number of students who successfully complete the BSc Medical Sciences at University of Glamorgan to enter Year 2 of the Cardiff MBChB programme and arrangements that allow Cardiff University Medical students to intercalate to a specialist sports medicine year at UWIC.

The Open University uses its well-established credit transfer mechanisms to work with partner HEIs to enable learners to move effectively – in either direction – between flexible part-time distance learning HE provision, and full or part time face-to-face delivery.

The Region will explore the possibility of further articulation agreements between the Higher Education Institutions in the Region especially in the areas of STEM, Modern Foreign Languages and progression into the professions.

Key Progression Routes for Welsh Medium Provision in SE Wales

Progression routes for Welsh-medium based provision are expanding in the Region through engagement with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the establishment of Subject Development Plans. In accordance with the Subject Development Plans there are aims within the Region to expand Welsh medium provision in the areas of Law, Business, Management & Tourism, Sport & Leisure, Maths & Physics and Nursing.

There is also a continued focus on Medicine and other Health related subjects, particularly at Cardiff University and work is ongoing with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to plan how best to tackle this area.

Also, within the region there are a growing number of Welsh medium schools from which students progress to degree and Foundation programmes which

offer the opportunity to study either the full course or individual modules through the medium of Welsh. In collaboration with LAN (14-19), a range of credit bearing modules are being developed with HEIs to meet the needs of learners and to provide a Welsh medium bridge to HE in the region.

The Region will work closely with the Coleg Cymru Cenedlaethol in promoting HE opportunities to study in Welsh and this work will include specific events conducted in Welsh, illustrating specific progression routes from 14-19 to HE.

Progression to Higher Level Studies (Postgraduate)

All of the HEIs within the region offer a range of postgraduate and higher level provision. Progression to higher level provision has been identified by the SE HE providers and the stakeholder consultation as a key role toward economic regeneration within the region.

One particular aspect to explore and develop will be ensuring fair access into the professions at both full degree level and postgraduate level. Many professions require postgraduate or continuing professional development provision for access and retention.

As part of its wider PGT rationalisation to better meet the needs of employers and the workforce, the Open University in Wales has added new PGT routes in Systems Thinking, Religious Studies, Advancing Professional Practice (health) and professional Science and undertaken a fundamental redesign of its AMBA/ACSAB/EQUIS accredited MBA.

There is also a wide range of continuing professional development provision offered in the Region across the disciplines including medical and health related, law, business and management, art and design, education, IT and computing and sport.

Priorities Identified for the Planning Period

- Fair access into the professions at both undergraduate and postgraduate level
- Improving progression routes through UHOVI
- Working with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to enhance progression routes in Welsh medium provision
- Engage with the HE STEM programme to improve progression in STEM subjects
- Work with CILT Cymru to improve progression into Modern Foreign Languages
- Engaging with the HEFCW-commissioned project to map progression from FE to HE with the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and Colegau Cymru
- Continuing to ensure a wide range of continuing professional development provision in the Region
- Increase the range and volume of work-based provision so that it more appropriately addresses employer, market and learner need as well as the wider regional needs for workforce development

- Maintain and where possible increase part-time HE provision in the context of the introduction of a new fees and funding system for part-time.

D Identification of any new higher education provision required within the region

Assessment of demand for new higher education provision within the Region is based on:

- the audit of provision which highlighted potential gaps and potential for achieving greater differentiation between the HE providers (Section B);
- consideration of the significant variation in participation rates across the SE Wales region, specifically noting that the region has the unitary authorities of Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Torfaen where participation rates in HE are lower than average for Wales, and that there are instances of very low participation in specific Community First areas. Universities and Government have already identified the need to greatly increase the level of higher education attainment across the Heads of the Valleys region as a critical element in the regional regeneration strategy. It is for this reason that Newport and Glamorgan, and the FE Colleges of Coleg Gwent, Merthyr College, Ystrad Mynach and Coleg Morgannwg, have come together with dedicated funding to pursue the UHOVI project with a target of recruiting 4,700 extra FTEs in the region.
- the HE sector's role in the transformation agenda with a view to identifying new curricula that broadens the progression routes into HE;
- the South East Region's development of new part-time Foundation Degrees;
- ensuring full degree provision is available for those able and wishing to progress from foundation degrees;
- ensuring postgraduate taught provision (courses or modules) is available for those able and willing to progress from first degrees, especially in areas where further study is a requirement to enter or remain within the profession;
- an assessment of demand from prospective and current students for different subjects, modes and levels of provision. The Institutions within the Region are particularly mindful of the changing patterns in demand for entry into undergraduate provision within the current economic climate and also of the demand from graduates to return to higher education after a period of employment to upskill or reskill to remain attractive in the employment market;
- employer input particularly via Institutions' and their departments' external advisory boards, and also via the Regional Stakeholder event which emphasised the need for more flexible delivery of provision for their employees and better employability skills from graduates;
- the need to increase employability and entrepreneurship skills among graduates of all disciplines for the benefit of the individual and the

employer, either through direct work experience as an integral part of HE study or through specific modules. Only ca. 30% of HE students within the UK currently gain some form of work experience during their study compared to over 80% in some other European countries. Over recent years, sandwich degrees have been in decline and the region wishes to address this trend;

- recognition that certain high cost and niche subject areas require consolidation within a limited number of institutions to ensure the existence of sustainable high quality provision for Wales;
- the need for the region to adapt its provision to respond to predicted demographic and economic change, e.g. the forecast increase in demand for HE from 'mature' students, flexible forms of study, and a variety of progression routes;
- the vital role of HE in stimulating economic recovery, in particular noting the Welsh Government's Economic Renewal priority sectors:
 - ICT
 - Energy and environment
 - Advanced materials and manufacturing
 - Creative industries
 - Life sciences
 - Financial and professional services
 - Construction
 - Tourism
 - Food and farming;
- the twin themes of *For our Future* of enhancing social justice and supporting a buoyant economy.

The audit undertaken in 2010/11 informed thinking about the need for growth in certain types of provision, and new types of provision. It identified gaps in provision which have been addressed, at least in part, by the successful bids in 2010/11 which expanded provision in areas such as STEM, MFL and the food industry. The Region has an ongoing commitment to deliver this provision. Also in generating this information, the audit of provision helped the institutions to develop a deeper understanding about the academic portfolio of the Region. The individual institutions within the Region are aware of areas where provision is still lower than other areas of the UK and will continue to develop provision in response to regional need. In using this improved knowledge in collaborative working, the region will ensure that it does so in a manner that does not breach EU and UK competition law. The Region is exploring whether there is a gap in regional provision in the area of Land Based Studies which could be addressed through collaborative working.

Institutions within the region have become more flexible in patterns and timing of delivery and UHOVI has been a major catalyst in this. Increasing numbers of smaller qualifications are being offered that are tailored to students' and employers' needs.

The Region will also continue to work through the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to implement proposals for the development of Welsh-medium provision identified in the Subject development Plans.

E Identification of opportunities for more coordinated widening access activities

HEFCW Circular W10/41HE “Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategies 2011/12 to 2013/14: Initial Guidance” requested that:

“In developing learning and teaching and widening access strategies institutions will want to take account of their regional strategies, including their role in, and contribution to, these strategies. This might include joint curriculum working, rationalisation of provision, reducing unnecessary duplication and progression arrangements.”

Whilst it should be acknowledged that individual institutions have developed their widening access activity in the context of their own vision, values and strategic priorities, regional partners are confident that due consideration has been given to the regional widening access dimension in the development of their widening access strategies for the period 2011-14. There is evidence, arising from a mapping exercise of joint working of a commitment to joint working between regional partners and/or with other interested parties, for example, to develop a progression plan for the professions, flexible study routes for employees and collaborative progression pathways (as evidenced in Section C). This mapping information will now form the basis of detailed discussions between the regional partners, between individual institutions (e.g. UHOVI) and between institutions and interested parties as appropriate.

The primary conduit for collaborative widening access activity will however continue to be through First Campus, the Reaching Wider partnership for South-East Wales (see *below*), which comprises:

- The HEI Partners – University of Glamorgan (lead partner), UWIC, Cardiff University, UW Newport, the OU in Wales;
- FE Partners – Coleg Morgannwg, Merthyr Tydfil College, Bridgend College, Barry College, Ystrad Mynach College, Coleg Glan Hafren, Coleg Gwent;
- Partner Organisations – Careers Wales.

As an impartial advocate of further and higher education in South East Wales, First Campus is able to broker between partners, the voluntary sector and community groups across all Community First wards in the region.

To ensure that the First Campus (FC) regional activities are consistent with the Regional Strategy, arrangements have been put in place to enable two-way communication between the FC Steering Group and the Regional Strategy Steering Group with the FC Steering Group reporting to the Regional Strategy Steering

Group. First Campus provides an important link with the stakeholders representing local learners, and as such, FC is an important advisory source to the Regional Strategy Steering Group. It is anticipated that the Regional Strategy Steering Group will continue to seek First Campus support to take forward those actions at regional level consistent with its remit, for example it may be appropriate for some of the areas for exploration identified in Section C to be taken forward by First Campus.

To deliver the First Campus Partnership's strategic aims during 2011-14, the following objectives will need to be implemented across the region:

- Raise Higher Education (HE) awareness amongst pupils, teachers and parents/carers.
- Work with the parents/ families/ carers of the young people who access FC projects, collaborating with Widening Access teams, CF Officers and third sector organisations to develop programmes to reskill and upskill those already in the workforce and those of working age not in the workforce.
- Work with Industry, Business in the Community (BiTC), community and voluntary organisations, and the Mid Glamorgan Education Business Partnership (EBP) to develop programmes in order to address the needs and requirements of social enterprise and employers. In 2010/11 the partnerships will strengthen and develop further these links, to include Careers Wales.
- Focus on 8-14 year olds in order to develop a pre – NEET strategy concentrating on the critical time when young people are most likely to disengage from education, therefore working towards a preventive rather than a reactive measure.
- Work with young people, teachers, youth workers, parents, families and carers to highlight the progression pathways and opportunities to access HE.
- Collaborate with Widening Access teams, Communities First Partnerships and third sector organisations to sign post to adult learning progression pathways from the workplace, highlighting the notion of shorter, more timely, and for flexible higher levels of learning allowing more people in Wales to experience higher education, with higher level skills.
- Work with schools and community groups in the Heads of the Valleys (HoV) region in order to offer high quality, innovative and inspiring projects that allow participants to access all universities and colleges engaging in HE delivery in the SE Wales region.
- Target in a systematic way Communities First schools, defining responsibilities of each FC partner to ensure we play to our strengths and provide consistent top quality standards of provision.
- Work with the regional Social Services Looked After Teams to support Children in Care who have the potential in progressing to HE.

- Develop and reinforce Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) with particular reference to careers and student finance.
- Promote and share good practice with collaborative multi sectoral working (for example, Communities First, Young Peoples Partnerships, Voluntary sector) offering appropriate projects designed around the needs of city and valley communities.
- Deliver programmes in the community as part of a learning pathway into part-time learning opportunities through the University of the Heads of the Valleys (UHOVI), as well as the Open University in Wales.
- Work collaboratively to avoid duplication with other widening access outreach programmes; allowing greater scope for people (parents, families and carers) to be able to achieve higher level skills by signposting to bespoke learning opportunities.
- Establish a 'Student Voice' Forum for the partnership giving young learners who are eligible to access our activity programmes the opportunity for their voices to be heard.
- FC through its 'partnership school model' will be able to hear the voice of key stakeholders to inform its activities programme.
- Raise the Reaching Wider profile and promote the success of such a collaborative project through involvement where possible with governing bodies and advisory fora of appropriate organisations and institutions.
- Work closely with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in promoting HE opportunities to study in Welsh. This work will include specific events conducted in Welsh, illustrating specific progression routes from 14-19 to HE.
- Continue to promote and implement designated programmes for supporting ethnic minorities to include progression routes into HE for refugees, asylum seekers & migrant workers.
- Work with the relevant Equalities Managers to inform the equality impact assessment plans of each university and college, including the sharing of good practice.

F Identification of opportunities for joint regional work with employers

The Regional Stakeholder Event, held on 20 October 2010 and attended by representatives of current students, learner representative groups and employers, identified three broad requirements of the Strategy for Higher

Education within the South East:

- HE is a key regional driver for economic recovery and growth;
- the Universities and FE Colleges should 'speak with one voice' to remove the confusion among learners and employers of the routes into the HE provision and expertise available within the region; and
- the South East region must play a wider role to deliver for all of Wales and establish Wales' place in the world.

There is already much engagement between employers and universities within the Region, much of which is addressing the specific employer-related feedback which was gained from the Regional Stakeholder Event. There will continue to be many individual links between academic staff/departments/universities and employers that contribute to responsiveness to employer needs through curriculum design, student placements, knowledge transfer, relationships with professional bodies and input directly into academic School external advisory boards. Such links have to stay at this level to be effective. As the majority of the activity is at the level of individual university, department or individual member of staff, it is recognised that 'speaking with one voice' can be limited.

Joint regional engagement to date has focussed on activities such as:

- The strong track record of knowledge exchange collaboration amongst the universities based in South East Wales and employers with notable examples being the Spinout Wales Programme and the GO Wales Programme.
- The participation of Cardiff University, University of Glamorgan, University of Wales Institute Cardiff and University of Wales, Newport in the successful Cardiff University Innovation Network and InPart where representatives from employers and universities come together to progress knowledge exchange activities.
- The Strategic Insight Programme (SIP) Scheme between University of Glamorgan, Newport and UWIC which is now being extended to an all-Wales Scheme funded through the HEFCW Innovation & Engagement collaborative funds. The relationships and work developed through the SIP will be built upon and embedded within the Region.

This joint working is being strengthened through engagement with the South East Wales Economic Forum, of which all universities and FE colleges are now members. This will be the main channel of two-way dialogue between HE providers and regional employers to consider regional skills needs in a more co-ordinated manner. The new Chair of the Forum is from the HE sector and this presents an ideal opportunity to develop the relationship further and to make it work more effectively.

In addition to this channel, the HE providers will continue to employ other existing joint activities with employers and employer representative bodies such as the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), and will develop these where benefits can

be identified. The effectiveness of these routes will, of course, be kept under review.

The universities within the Region are working closely with the Welsh Government on the A4B Programme which will help to harness the knowledge, expertise and facilities that exist within academia and convert this into economic benefit for Wales.

The Industrial Liaison Officer's Group has submitted a complete mapping of universities' engagement with the Sector Skills Council to the Sector Skills Alliance and feedback from the Alliance is now awaited.

G Identification of collaborative capital developments and shared services

Shared Services

Discussions are ongoing and will, at least in part, be advanced under the recommendations for the Region in the Future Shape of Universities in Wales and the Region's further assessment of this.

The HEW-commissioned feasibility study on shared services recommended that there were two potential areas for institutions to share services – catering and cleaning. The institutions in the Region have reviewed the recommendations of the study but consider that the benefits to the Region and the individual institutions cannot be sufficiently demonstrated to warrant taking forward at this stage.

However, the Region is currently exploring two other areas where there may be potential to share services.

Collaborative capital developments

With regard to collaborative capital developments, the research equipment inventory work being co-ordinated by HEW is ongoing and running to schedule. This consists of the compilation of an all-Wales inventory of research and other forms of infrastructural facilities that could potentially be shared. This would enable universities to avoid duplication of capital expenditure.

Within the region there are also collaborative capital developments in existence and under exploration which will facilitate progression, including:

- the Newport and Coleg Gwent collaboration over the development of the learning campus in Ebbw Vale in partnership with Blaenau Gwent which is nearing completion;
- Newport is also collaborating with Blaenau Gwent on the development of the Sports Centre at the Works and will be delivering curriculum from there when it opens in 2013;
- Glamorgan and Merthyr Tydfil College are engaged in developing a new post-16 tertiary college – Merthyr Learning Quarter – in Merthyr Tydfil.
- The University of Glamorgan is continuing discussions with Cardiff and the

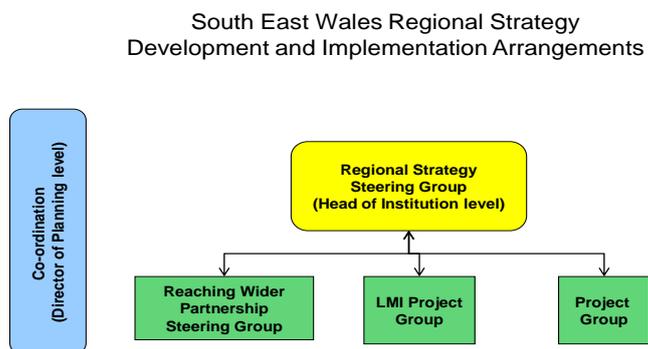
Vale College over a new capital project for South Cardiff - part of this development will include the sharing of services between the University's Atrium Campus and the new development.

H Governance

Governance and programme management arrangements

The governance arrangements for the South East Wales HE Regional Strategy need to reflect the autonomous nature of the HE Institutions and the responsibilities of their governing bodies. Collaboration and competition need to be balanced appropriately to ensure that Institutions work collaboratively where this is of benefit to the stakeholders of HE and to the institutions themselves, while ensuring that stakeholders are still able to gain from the benefits of competition between HE providers (i.e. driving up quality and product offering). It is also essential that the HE Institutions do not breach competition law.

The following governance structure will apply to the partnership working:



Each Institution ensures that the collaborative governance of the Regional Strategy connects appropriately with its own internal governance and decision-making structures. A session on regional planning as part of the HEW/CHEW/HEFCW strategic dialogue would be helpful to facilitate regional planning whilst allowing individual institutions to retain internal governance responsibility.

The Regional Strategy Steering Group is responsible for:

- Strategic guidance
- Strategic decision-making
- Defining the work-programme

- Guiding the Project Groups
- Monitoring the work of the Project Groups.

Project Groups are established to take forward specific actions within the Strategy Implementation Plan and are responsible for:

- Reporting to the Steering Group
- Agreeing the project scope and implementation plan with the Steering Group
- Managing the delivery of the project
- Project risk management
- Escalating issues and seeking guidance from the Steering Group.

The Reaching Wider Partnership Steering Group reports to the Regional Strategy Steering Group.

Co-ordination of the whole Regional Strategy programme (including strategy development and implementation) will be delivered through the Steering Group supported by the Directors of Planning (or equivalent) of all the HE providers, with the role of administrative lead provided by Cardiff University.

Dispute resolution mechanisms are included in the governance structure via escalation of issues from project groups to Steering Group if required.

Regional Stakeholder Engagement

Regional stakeholder engagement is achieved at several levels:

- Within Institutions, including:
 - Individual academic/department links with stakeholders relevant to their discipline (e.g. industrial advisory boards).
 - Institution level engagement with stakeholders (e.g. current students, lay membership of Governing Bodies, external advisory boards).
- At regional level, including:
 - South East Wales Economic Forum
 - Dialogue with the Sector Skills Councils
 - Further consultation with targeted groups of learners and employers as required.

Assessment of the equality and diversity impact of the proposals in the regional strategy

Each institution takes responsibility for the impact assessment of any proposals relating to them under their normal processes given that specific evidence for each institution is required.