

Joint Working Group on Higher Education Provision in North East Wales

Purpose

To identify and evaluate options for the delivery of high quality, fit for purpose, sustainable higher education in North East Wales which meets the requirements of students, local people and employers. To consider the links as appropriate between higher education and further education provision locally.

Remit

- To establish criteria against which options will be assessed, drawing on those previously provided by HEFCW and having due regard to the outcomes set out in the report of Sir Adrian Webb's review group.
- To invite proposals for the future provision of high quality, fit for purpose, sustainable higher and further education in NE Wales which demonstrate how they will meet the requirements of current and prospective students, local people and employers. The proposals will be without commitment and subject to due diligence. Any public investment likely to be required should be clearly identified together with proposals for ensuring that there is an appropriate economic and social return on this investment.
- To prepare an evaluation of proposals received, drawing upon external independent expertise as appropriate, and make recommendations for consideration by the Minister and HEFCW, noting that options may not be mutually exclusive and might be combined.

Membership

- Professor Sir Adrian Webb (Chair)
- Glyndwr University (Governing body representative)
- Student representative
- An employer representative from NE Wales
- A representative from the UK further education sector
- HEFCW (Observer)
- Welsh Government (Observer)

Operation

- The group will be chaired by Sir Adrian Webb
- The group will meet virtually and face to face.
- The identification and apportionment of costs arising from the work of this group will be decided by the JWG in consultation with Welsh Government and HEFCW representatives.
- The Group will be serviced by Welsh Government.
- No public announcements will be made without the agreement of all members of the JWG.

Key objectives and target dates

Proposals outlining the possible future direction of Glyndwr University will be limited to those institutions which fit within the umbrella of the Webb Review's recommendations. A letter to be sent on Monday 9th February to Bangor University, Coleg Cambria, Swansea University and UWTSD asking if they are interested in making a proposal to support the further development of Glyndwr University as an individual partner institution or in combination with others

This letter will specify that if the institutions' boards are interested they will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) by Monday 16th February before additional information is provided.

Institutions interested in making a proposal should prepare an outline statement of interest of 10-15 pages in length addressing the following seven areas by Tuesday 7th April 2015.

- Assessment of current and future FE and HE needs and wants in North East Wales.
- Vision for the development of future provision for further and higher education.
- Assessment of the pattern of current provision and plans for future development
 - o Learning, Teaching and Assessment
 - o Research and Innovation
 - o Enterprise and public engagement
- Assessment of financial position of the institution and outline plans for the future.
- Proposed governance arrangements and legal accountability structure for the new institution/partnership which will deliver the vision for higher education in North East Wales.
- Proposed quality assurance arrangements for the new institution/partnership which will deliver high quality, fit for purpose and sustainable higher (and further?) education in NE Wales
- Outline transition arrangements.

The outline proposal will be assessed and evaluated by the JWG with a view to making a provisional recommendation, subject to possible further due diligence, to the Minister for Education and Skills by 12th May.

It is expected that the JWG will meet formally on three occasions. Once to agree the terms of reference, key objectives and target dates and to note the text of the letters to institutions. On a second occasion to review and assess the submissions that have been received and to commission any additional scrutiny or due diligence assessment of the submissions. Finally, to agree a recommendation to the Minister and to agree the outline transition arrangements for any new form of higher education provision in NE Wales. The chair will also arrange such meetings between himself and stakeholders as he, HEFCW and Welsh Government consider necessary to complete the work scheduled for the JWG.