

CCEA

COUNCIL

Minutes of an extraordinary Council Meeting held on Tuesday 15 September 2020, at 9.30 am via Hybrid arrangements (Clarendon and MS Teams).

Present : Mr T Carson (Chair) Mr C McKinney
 Dr A Kerr Mrs K O'Hare
 Ms P Slevin Mrs P Leitch
 Mr R Thompson Mrs C Fitzsimons
 Ms R Byrne Mrs S Kirk
 Mr B Wilson

 Mr J Edwards (Chief Executive)
 Mrs L Scott (Director of Finance & Corporate Services)
 Miss M Farragher (Director of Education)

 Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

Introduction

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting and advised on the protocols for participation.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs C Harpur and Dr L Caul.

2 Conflict of Interests

Members confirmed there were no conflict of interest on any of the agenda items.

3 Chair's Business

Minutes of previous meetings

The Chair confirmed that the minutes of the Council briefings (16 August, 25 August) together with the minutes from 5 August, will be ratified at the Council Business Meeting on 24 September.

Council Member Resignation

The Chair advised of the resignation of Mrs Marlene Kinghan on medical grounds, and that Christine Harpur was on a leave of absence due to illness, and would be unable to return for some months.

Interim vice Chair

The Chair asked members for expressions of interests to act as vice chair from now (with immediate effect) to 31 January 2021 to be forwarded to the Manager of the Council Secretariat outside of the meeting.

Interim Whistleblower

The Chair asked members for expressions of interests to act as Whistleblower from now (with immediate effect) to 31 January 2021 to be forwarded to the Manager of the Council Secretariat outside of the meeting.

Both appointments will be confirmed at the meeting on 24 September 2020.

Recruitment Process for New Chair and Members

The Chair confirmed that the recruitment process for a new Chair and new members was imminent.

Council Induction Sessions : Finance & Corporate Services + Education

The Chair advised that due to the extensive workload over the summer months for both officers and members the Council Induction sessions will be re-arranged in the coming weeks he would ask the Manager of the Council Secretariat to source an appropriate date to conclude the induction.

Meeting with Minister

The Chair confirmed that he had asked for a meeting with the Minister, and will be conducted remotely on Thursday 17 September. He advised that the items for discussion will focus on: the concerns CCEA Council has raised in regards to the maintenance of standards, future examinations series as well as the considerable pressure CCEA, as an organisation is experiencing.

An update on discussions and any outcomes of the meeting will be provided at the Council meeting on 24 September 2020.

4 Regulation

Maintenance of Standards 2020/21

C/Sp/1

The Chief Executive introduced this item.

The Head of Regulation (HoR) advised that historically standards are maintained year on year through outcomes. This is broadly based the nature and demand of the assessment, and ability of the cohort. She confirmed that CCEA jointly owned the GCSE and A Level brands with Ofqual and Quals Wales in order to add value and portability to CCEA qualifications.

She reported that due to the inflated outcomes both at A Level and GCSE following Summer 2020 awarding, there are now challenges around the 3-country maintenance of standards for Summer 2021, and advised that this is more urgent for CCEA and Quals Wales due to examinations series in November 2020 and January 2021.

The HoR confirmed that arising from initial talks with Ofqual and Quals Wales there was a strong view that the inflated outcomes of 2020 might not be sustained. She advised there was a need for a move back to the maintenance of standards approach to protect the value of the qualifications, and drew attention to the detail of paper C-Sp-1, in particular the Options for standard setting.

In discussions with Quals Wales the general consensus (informally) was to move away from the 2020 outcomes towards the year on year standards as last seen in 2019, however with some relaxation of outcomes to that the move back into previous years would be on a gradual incline.

The HoR recognised that 2020 was extraordinary given the global pandemic and the extraordinary circumstances presented including the loss of teaching and learning time. She explained the purpose of standards was to protect the learners year on year and the value and currency of the qualifications to ensure demand year on year was broadly the same and fair for all learners.

She stated the importance of CCEA existing within the 3-country standard, again to ensure portability for Northern Ireland learners and give them currency with the Russell Group, RoI and other UK universities.

A Council member sought clarification on the meaning of 'relaxed' and 'calculated'. The HoR advised that discussions were at an early stage in regards to the 3-country approach of standard setting. The STIG (technical group) would discuss the technical aspects. Further detail will be provided once the Regulators have had the opportunity to discuss the options proposed.

A Council member sought clarification on the mechanism for predictions as this area is misunderstood by the general public whereby it is believed (by those with no knowledge of the education system) the predictions are made by teaching staff. The HoR advised that the statistical outcomes based on candidate prior performance, based on GCSE performance would be used – this is known as the 3 country matrix and provides percentage outcomes based on the ability of the cohort. She explained that CCEA differs from England in that there is no strong data for GCSE whereas England has data from KS3 National Reference Tests (NRTs), therefore CCEA's GCSE predictions are based on common centre approach, ie outcomes based on candidate ability.

She gave an overview of the main component parts of the awarding process to include the setting of grade boundaries, and question papers. She recognised that there were many complexities in this area, some of which were technical in nature.

Members made the following points :

- Content that the 3 Regulators were working together on agreed outcomes; and the need for a gradual move back to standards.
- Commended the Chair and Chief Executive's constant liaison with the Minister for Education, however suggested that to guard against CCEA having to defend its position in the political arena, negotiations on maintaining standards should be conducted at the highest level.
- The need to ensure that the 2020/21 cohort is treated fairly and equitably, avoiding any perception that they will be treated differently.

A member suggested that it would be impossible to set a standard in an extreme situation and outcomes cannot be compared in a non-examined circumstances with a formal examination circumstances. He asked that this should be articulated clearly into the system, with a positive but robust message that things are different, the system is different and in recognition of that it would be challenging to achieve the same standard for 2021 given the issues encountered in 2020. He suggested that there could be a gradual blending back over the next 3 to 5 years, however this needs to be recognised publicly given the current global situation.

Consideration was needed on the type of communication required in order to present an understanding of the differences the system is encountering, clearly and concisely. He made a plea for CCEA to reinforce to its stakeholders that, as an Awarding Organisation, it was working in an extremely challenging and complex set of circumstances within tight timeframes.

The Chair thanked members for their contributions and stated that for this meeting it was the principle of moving back to maintenance of standards over time, whilst acknowledging there will be at difference in 2021. He sought agreement, in principle, for the HoR to take forward discussions as outlined in Option 2, and to reinforce the challenges currently encountered.

Members agreed with the preferred **Option 2** as the agreed line, formally proposed by Mrs Paula Leitch and seconded by Mr Robert Thompson.

Education

Consultation Outcomes on Assessment Arrangements for GCSE, AS and A Level Qualifications for Summer 2021 ***C/Sp 2***

The Chair drew attention to the supporting papers (C/Sp/2a-2e) provided as background information for this item.

The Chief Executive introduced the item and provided a brief overview of the way in which the consultation had been conducted, and gave an indication of the type of responses received.

The Director of Education (DoE) stated the importance of distinguishing between CCEA Awarding Organisation (AO) and CCEA Regulation, and confirmed that the process had been regulated thoroughly and welcomed the clear distinction of the two functions.

She reminded members that in light of the ongoing disruption CCEA had been asked to develop proposals on how GCSE and A Levels could be adapted for Summer 2021. She outlined the range of processes completed in order to draft the consultation document, and confirmed that the content of the consultation had been discussed in detail with DE and ETI to ensure the correct proposals would go forward to the Minister for final consideration and decision.

She referred to DE's formal request of 10 August asking CCEA to conduct a consultation on the basis that CCEA should aim to run a full examination series together with a number of other points (detailed on pages 1 and 2).

The consultation ran from 24 August until 7 September 2020, with 7094 responses received.

Recommendations

The DoE outlined the responses to the consultation questions, and summarised the recommendations based on findings from the consultation in regards to :

- Public Health adaptations

CCEA GCSE and GCE qualifications were reviewed against current public health requirements.

- Specification Order

CCEA will provide advice on the order in which units should be delivered with any amendments being provided in addendums required for each qualification.

- AS and A Level arrangements

Feedback was reasonably supportive, with 58% of respondents agreeing with the proposal that students in the second year of their A level studies should be required to take A2 unit assessment only. In regards to whether the course content should remain largely unchanged at AS and A Level at this time, 58% of respondents agreed with the CCEA position.

Further feedback has shown that in the event of mini lockdowns, and also with pupils being sent home due to the health restrictions, some schools are finding the Year 14 group challenging and are asking for further flexibility. The DoE confirmed that this will be explored in the contingency planning.

- Changes to Assessment at GCSE

The principle established for adaptations to GCSE should not exceed 40% of the qualification being omitted, and those qualifications who have a 50//50 split have not been adapted.

In regards to Languages, there was strong opposition for omitting units in that each unit is assessed in its own right (given the structure of the qualifications – ie oral assessments). The DoE hoped that the Minister would agree an approach appropriate for all languages

- GCSE English Language and Mathematics

This was a controversial element to progress in that respondents were against the initial proposal that all elements of GCSE English Language and GCSE Mathematics should be assessed, given that these are key qualifications for pathways and careers.

Optionality

The DoE said that DE were keen to include questions on optionality, however following discussion CCEA advised that this would not be advisable given the impact on lower ability students and would present equality issues, therefore no questions were included in the CCEA consultation.

Conclusion

In conclusion the DoE stated that it had been a lengthy and challenging process, however it was important to take into consideration the views of principals, parents and other stakeholders in regards to the consultation in order to prepare appropriate proposals/recommendations for Ministerial consideration. She would welcome a swift decision so CCEA was in a position to articulate this to centres.

She emphasised that any change to the system would introduce complexity and risks. Given the significant amount of public scrutiny CCEA was under, clarity of information being presented to the public was paramount. She recognised the difficulties in explaining (to the public) the way in which grade boundaries are set and how the awarding process is conducted.

The DoE said there was a need for a contingency plan to ensure other options are reviewed, including the use of CAGs again for 2021 (given the requests from Principals on this matter). It was confirmed that information would be brought to Council at its meeting on 11 November 2020.

The Chair thanked the DoE for the clarity of the information presented.

Council Discussion

Members thanked the DoE for the comprehensive paper and summary. However, raised a significant number of points. Clarification was provided (as follows):

- Huge concern in regards to the omissions of units for English (30%) and Mathematics (45%). Recognised no majority support for this, even from employers. From higher education perspective this affects every possible career path in meeting Grade C in both subjects, and could be indicative of standards dropping going forward Also would call into question the whole integrity of the cohort of students. If possible she suggested that available teaching time from other subjects being dropped could be reallocated English & Mathematics units, or at best

The DoE advised that due to the concerns raised in HE this is why colleagues did think it important to try to retain English and Maths in full so if discounts offered in other subjects this would create more time to focus on English and Maths. The challenge was buy in for this, given that students taking qualifications in modular fashion, they would not be keen in having to take English and Maths in full in this one academic year. She expressed concern over the timing of the consultation in this regard, and also the timetabling of English and Maths.

She assured members that the retention of the units would cover all the assessment objectives, and principals made argument that they will teach all units, however welcome less time in practising these. So reduction in time would allow time to cover the missed units.

She advised she attended the QAA Professional Regulatory Statutory Bodies Forum to discuss changes to GCSE given the concerns and making changes across the UK, and given in Northern Ireland differences in provision of qualifications (Linear vs Modular) between the jurisdictions. She confirmed that representative bodies of this forum understand the second year of the pandemic and to have any element of an examination would be better than not having anything. She advised that every school will work to the principle to ensure teachers understand the unit and also that it wasn't assessed formally and this is an area they want to focus on.

The Council member again suggested that there could be an element on reduced content. The DoE advised that this would be challenging due to the teaching order in schools, and it would take a significant amount of time to reach agreement across the centres on reduced content.

- Communication : To ensure all of this is communicated effectively to schools, parents and pupils and the reduction of units will be welcomed. Standards need to be retained. It would be impossible and unwelcomed by teachers if there was a suggestion for all to teach English and Mathematics at GCSE. Imperative that CCEA keep all stakeholders on board.

The Head of Regulation said it was important for Council to understand these proposals go further than England and Wales. She recognised the extraordinary circumstances the education system is operating under, and cautioned that England may change position, however her assessment was that CCEA was at present ahead of the curve in terms of mitigating the impact of COVID-19. She recognised the risks associated with divergence, however cognisance needs to be taken of the situation, and perhaps the need for extraordinary measures. The Chair concurred with these comments and agreed it important to recognise the heightened public opinion and the need to respond.

- Welcomed clarity provided, however options of sitting the units omitted and recognised the technical challenges, however would the mood at the moment allow the option to be offered, rather than to present a technical difficulty argument.

- Languages, welcomed the reduced pressure on students for GCSE, however shared reservations about the speaking unit not being assessed and asked for this to be revisited. This component is important to develop fluency in language learners, however reduction in content across the 4 objectives would be preferred.
- In regards to English and Mathematics, understand the earlier units not being assessed, will not impact on the knowledge and understanding of the students as this will be assessed in later units.
- Clarification was sought on whether learning outcomes for English and Maths would be met in future components.

The DoE confirmed that the assessment objectives are covered in the remaining units, and assured members the teaching would support assessment of the other unit.

The Chief Executive confirmed that officers had recognised the more difficult issues were in regards to GCSE English and Mathematics, however stated that the broad breadth of the subject would be covered within the proposal.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive drew attention to the detailed Recommendations outlined in Section 2 of the paper. He suggested that the record show Council have considered the key questions, and associated recommendations individually, formally proposed and seconded for adoption. This would provide the Chief Executive with the power to state that the range of options have been considered, risks have been understood, and they have been fully outlined by the DoE and Head of Regulation. This would then be submitted to DE as Advice supported by the documents presented at this meeting.

Members agreed with the Chief Executive's suggestion, and formally confirmed each of the recommendations had been considered in detail.

2.1 Public Health adaptations

Members were satisfied with the recommendation in regards to the question on Public Health Adaptations : *'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals to implement public health adaptations to CCEA qualifications'*.

Proposed by Ms Patricia Slevin, and seconded by Ms Rose Byrne. The recommendation was formally adopted by Council.

2.2 Specification Order

Members were satisfied with the recommendation in regards to the question on Specification Order : *'To what extent do you agree or disagree that CCEA should provide guidance for the order of a specification'*.

Proposed by Mr Robert Thompson, and seconded by Mrs Paula Leitch. The recommendation was formally adopted by Council.

2.3 AS and A Level Arrangements

There were 2 questions in this section.

Q1 : Members were satisfied with the recommendation in regards to the question : *'To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal that in Summer 2021, students in the second year of their A level studies should be required to take A2 unit assessment only?'*

Proposed by Mr Robert Thompson, and seconded by Mrs Carol Fitzsimons.

Q2 : Members were satisfied with the recommendation in regards to the question : *'Other than public health adaptations, do you think course content should remain largely unchanged at AS and A Level at this time?'*

Proposed by Ms Rose Byrne, and seconded by Mrs Kathleen O'Hare.

Both recommendations were formally adopted by Council.

2.4 Changes or Assessment at GCSE

There were 3 questions in this section.

Q1 : Members were satisfied with the recommendation in regards to the question : *'To what extent do you agree or disagree that all 2020/21 Year 12 students who started their course in September 2019 should, where possible be permitted to omit assessment in one unit in each GCSE qualification to be completed by Summer 2021, if they wish to do so?'*

The Chief Executive clarified that this was in regards to all subjects excluding English Language and Mathematics.

Proposed by Mr Robert Thompson, and seconded by Mr Brian Wilson.

Q2 : *'To what extent do you agree or disagree that the total amount that any qualification adjustment in 2020/21 should not exceed 40% of the specification?'*

Proposed by Mr Robert Thompson, and seconded by Mrs Kathleen O'Hare.

The Chair stated that there was no ideal solution under these circumstances, however assured members that CCEA continued to act in the best interests of learners.

Q3 : *'To what extent do you agree or disagree that the 2021 exams should not include more optional questions than usual?'*

Proposed by Ms Patricia Slevin, and seconded by Mrs Paula Leitch.

These recommendations were formally adopted by Council.

2.5 GCSE English Language and Mathematics

The majority of Council members were satisfied with the recommendation in regards to the question : *'Do you think that students should be assessed in all elements of GCSE English Language, and Mathematics?'*

One Council member asked for her objections to omitting any units in regards to GCSE English Language and Mathematics be recorded at this point in the meeting.

Proposed by Mr Brian Wilson, and seconded by Ms Patricia Slevin. The recommendation was formally adopted by Council.

General

Communications Strategy

The Chair stated that a clear communications strategy was critical. This recommendation by the Chair was formally proposed by Mr Brian Wilson and seconded by Ms Patricia Slevin.

Contingencies

The Director of Education confirmed that a range of contingencies for all qualifications would be developed and brought forward to Council. Members asked that the following be taken into account:

Whether if there were further disruptions as a result of the pandemic, might we have a position where CCEA could say that the A2 grade would not be lower than the AS grade (this could provide technical difficulties) and alleviate concerns being articulated by principals and the injustice that AS cannot contribute and also the suggestion that CAGs may be an option. These would be matters for further exploration by Council.

The Chief Executive confirmed that a range of contingencies can be explored, in place, however if we choose to do this it would be for CCEA qualifications only and would impact those learners not taking CCEA's qualifications. This would be a proposal to explore with risks for consideration.

Members suggested that these be explored but not actioned at present.

Other

A Council member drew attention to the proposals in English and Mathematics – and asked that should there be agreement for unit omission that they be equally weighted for both subjects at GCSE. He also expressed concern at the amount of teaching time that has passed to date and asked for a speedy decision from DE on these matters. He said there could be possible reputational damage should there be further delays in providing communication/advice from CCEA and instruction from DE.

A Council member sought clarification on whether it was an option for CCEA to approach legal firms who champion certain causes to provide an alternative view on the recommendations.

The Chief Executive, in response, recognised the reputational risk to CCEA, confirmed that he would articulate the views of Council that a rapid decision would be welcomed.

In terms of legal opinion, he advised that the Minister would take a view and issue either a Direction or Instruction to CCEA, most likely under Article 74 amending CCEA's service.

He suggested to Council that it would be appropriate to wait until a response is received from the Minister, when further discussions will be required on how these will be taken forward.

A Council member sought and received clarification on matters in relation to synoptic elements of A2 papers, supported by provided in Appendix 1.

The Chair thanked members and officers for their significant contributions to this item.

Mrs O'Hare tendered her apologies for the next session. She sought and received confirmation that an item on Public Confidence would be on the agenda for the Council meeting scheduled for 24 September 2020.

Consideration of Examination Contingencies 2020/21

The Chair introduced this item and asked the Chief Executive to outline the components parts of the paper.

The Chief Executive apologised for the late issue of the paper. He advised that this was an ever changing position and continues to hold CCEA in a very fluid and challenging situation. He drew attention to the conclusion of the Director of Education's paper (previously discussed), outlining active consideration to position of contingencies. He also referred to the letter issued by DE to provide arrangements on basis

of examinations to continue and that this was also the aspiration of the Minister of Education (at this time). He referred to pages 1 and 2 of the paper (original proposals 21 July), and advised that a series of additional proposals have been provided following the feedback received on the consultation.

He gave a high level overview of the main areas of the paper and drew attention to the detail of the Options provided for consideration, in particular:

Option 7b (post consultation) – The provision of examinations with amendments are proposed and modified via consultation; and

Option 8 – The provision of an alternative approach to examinations for GCSE, which would most likely be a quality assured approach to centre assessed grades.

He confirmed that no other Awarding Organisation (AO) across the jurisdictions had put forward proposals to date. He outlined the main areas of the paper, which explores issues Council has raised in regards to outcomes; changes in participation levels, impacts on institutions, schools and the teaching environment in regards to the loss of teaching and learning as currently constituted. He recognised that the loss of teaching and learning time has been significant and the impact of this, during the pandemic, has been challenging.

He referred to the detailed PESTLE analysis provided in the paper and contextualised the range of issues for Options 7B and 8 in regards to Political, Economical, Social, Technological and Environmental.

The Chief Executive highlighted the following :

- Sense of fairness should be achieved and the alleviation of the burden on standards;
- The growing concerns about the viability of qualifications in the current climate and also over time;
- No public support for statistical standardisation;
- Differentiated between Examinations and Qualifications;
- CCEA, to date, has received no COVID-19 funding despite application and request given the implications for 2020/21.
- Lack of data around the qualitative learning

He stated that CCEA does not have sufficient human resource to run both Option 7B and 8 in parallel, and expressed concern at the significantly challenging technical issues to implement the proposals would be enormous, ie on both awarding, technical and regulation teams. There would be a need to develop an entirely new awarding system in regards to capture and development of data. Expressed concern which will be raised at ARAC, in that the more changes, both in terms of breadth and depth the more it is likely to increase error, and following the issues we have faced during 2020, there is a zero tolerance, therefore this presents significant challenge should both options be considered.

Legal implications will also have to be considered and for CCEA to move to contingency would be a matter of Ministerial Direction on the primary legislation as per Article 101 (summer 2020). This would also require an enhanced alternative appeals process, as well as the development of alternative specimen examination papers.

The Chief Executive raised the issue of potential differences across the UK and the possibility of a break in the 3-country brand (GCSE and A Level), and advised it would be possible to do so as CCEA is a joint signatory.

Detailed Corporate Risk Assessments were also provided for both options. The Chief Executive pointed out that there were high risks in all elements of the work being undertaken by CCEA at this point and time.

Recommendation

The Chief Executive advised that there was a very refined differential between the two Options at present, however at this point the technical approaches are required to be enacted around moderation and control. In regards to the tipping point, the earlier the decision is made the better the quality of approach in being able to train teachers and provision of appropriate support. He cautioned that if CCEA were to advise on this position it would not be in line with the Minister's aspirations, however believed it was appropriate for Council to consider the full range of scenarios.

In regards to a preferred Option, the Chief Executive, proposed that we maintain Option 8 as a real and live option and move to proceed with technical issues as quickly as possible, and appraise Council at a further meeting of the approaches and seek Council's approval before submission to DE at the earliest opportunity.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his input and drew attention to the Options presented. He sought clarification from the Chief Executive on the provision of advice.

The Chief Executive suggested that Council provide advice on Examinations, and that Council consider the options of alternative examination approaches as this is a live option. He advised that CCEA will present a preferred option in terms of implementing alternative arrangements. He suggested that a continuous active review was required to ensure that CCEA was in a state of readiness, should there be a requirement to enact alternative arrangements. He stated that these decisions were required as soon as possible, and pointed out the dangers of significant delays to the entire education system should these not be realised until November/December 2020.

A Council member whilst fully appreciating the urgency of this, and said that in terms of contingency for examinations, this required further exploration. She raised the following :

Option 7B – more fully articulated in regulation paper of 21 July – around use of estimated 'mean' raised cause for concern, in regards to the validity of the grades going forward.

The Chief Executive advised that this would no longer be in place.

In terms of considering Option 8 – contingency option – would CCEA be able to retain its high examinations standard following the repercussions of this pandemic.

The Chief Executive advised that the return to CCEA Standard is currently being addressed and an update will be provided at the Council meeting on 24 September.

A dedicated Communications Team on all of this, with communications being released to Council in advance of public circulation.

The Chair thanked Rose for the points raised and concurred with the suggestion with a Communications Strategy.

The Chief Executive confirmed that all issues would be progressed at the Council meeting on 24 September.

A Council member, whilst understanding the reasons for further exploration of the paper, and recognising the wish to return to normal, time would be required to check if a return to full examinations would be viable. She expressed concern at the impact a significant delay in the provision of contingency arrangements would have, and suggested that this be presented to the Minister as quickly as possible.

The DoE concurred with the points raised both Council members, and advised that work was being conducted at significant pace and asked for Option 8 to be considered carefully. She sought clarification on the status of the paper – and wanted to ensure the Minister was aware of all of the technical issues surrounding the options provided. She suggested that more time be provided to Council to consider the paper.

The Head of Regulation commented on the contingencies for CAGs and suggested the need for a technical risk assessment to be carried out and cautioned against one technical risk being replaced by another moving forwards.

A Council member referred to Option 8 and suggested that a more robust process be put in place for Centre Assessed Grades, to ensure this would withstand public scrutiny, should the need arise. Contingency arrangements should also be put in place to allow young people to sit examinations if they wish to do so.

The Chair thanked members for their input and concurred with the points raised. He alluded to the fact that other jurisdictions will have to deal with similar range of issues, and on balance asked that the options be considered and risks mitigated as quickly as possible.

A Council expressed concern at CCEA taking the lead and initiative in regards to Option 8, however concurred with the suggestion of a contingency plan being put in place if examinations will run. She also asked that a dedicated communications team be put forward as an action point for the Chair's consideration.

The Chair, in his concluding remarks, said it was appropriate to take cognisance of the fact that at present the Minister wishes for examinations to run in 2021. This is also the view across jurisdictions, however he recognised the difficulties CCEA faced given the decisions taken in regards to the awarding of GCSEs and A Levels during summer 2020.

He agreed it would be appropriate for Council to continue to actively develop contingency plans to allow us to provide advice to the Minister if required, He suggested that this is kept under close review and asked Executive Team to continue to develop safeguards around the options presented.

He wished to place on record his thanks, on behalf of Council, to all staff who continued to provide high quality papers and information under significantly pressurised timeframes.

NI Assembly : Education Committee : 16 September 2020

The Chair reminded members that he, together with the Chief Executive and the Director of Education would attend the NI Assembly Education Committee on Wednesday 16 September, and confirmed that if any significant issues arose following his meeting with the Minister on 17 September, Council would be informed as a matter of urgency.

He thanked members for their patience and support, and recognised the criticality of the issues under discussion at present.

Date of Next Meeting

The Chair confirmed that the next Council business meeting was scheduled for Thursday 24 September 2020 at 10 am

