

CCEA

COUNCIL COVID-19 BRIEFING

Minutes of a Special Council meeting held via MS Teams on Tuesday 21 July 2020 at 10 am.

Present: Mr T Carson (Chair) Mr RJ Thompson
Ms P Slevin Dr L Caul
Mr B Wilson Mrs K O'Hare
Dr A Kerr Mrs P Leitch
Mrs S Kirk Mrs C Harpur

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

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms R Byrne; Mrs C Fitzsimons; Mr C McKinney and Mrs M Kinghan.

2 Conflict of Interests

There were no conflicts of interest on any of the agenda items.

3 Chair's Business

PRP Approvals – Remuneration Committee

The Chair thanked members of the Remuneration Committee for expediting the approvals process for PRP to allow payments to be made in the July pay run.

Chairs' Update – Ofqual, Qualifications Wales, SQA

The Chair advised that he had scheduled telephone calls with the Chairs of Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and SQA. All share the same concerns in regards to governance, examinations and regulation following the Covid-19 crisis. He would provide more detail at the August Council meeting.

4 Chief Executive's Situation Report

The Chief Executive advised that he had amended the briefing to focus on the draft advice for GCSE and GCE Qualifications 2020-2021.

Media Coverage : Examination Fees

The Chief Executive drew attention to the recent media coverage (14 July) on CCEA's position in charging centres for examination fees. He confirmed that Council had agreed the proposal to go forward to the Minister, who accepted the advice and made the final decision. He confirmed that DE were of the view that schools had received their budget and sufficient provision had been made to honour the payments to CCEA.

He advised that the media reported WJEC had agreed a 23% rebate on examinations, and explained that as WJEC was a charitable body it adhered to different governance.

The issue has been closed out.

For consideration/ratification

The Chief Executive apologised for the late issue of the paper and confirmed that discussions continued with DE as matters evolve. He acknowledged the substantial amount of work undertaken by the Director of Education (DoE) and her team in formulating the options and proposal for consideration.

The Chief Executive drew attention to the information provided and gave an overview of the main component parts of the document. In regards to CCEA's underpinning Principles (page 4), he confirmed that DE had requested a fifth be added to allow as much flexibility as possible in developing the options:

Flexibility: Ensuring solutions can reasonably withstand changes in health restrictions and delivery conditions.

Options

The Chief Executive drew attention to the detail of Option 1-9 provided on pages 7 – 18. He confirmed that all avenues and possibilities had been considered for each option.

He outlined the Options Assessment (detailed on page 20) and, given DE's feedback on the proposals and changes in the English and Welsh proposals recommended the following to Council :

- AS and A Level qualifications changes be based on Option 5 for GCE.
- Option 7a or Option 7b for GCSE, with Option 7 being the best approach.

He advised that a brief period of consultation would be carried out on the preferred options, to enable clarity to be provided for schools before teaching starts at the end of August.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive, and recognized the complexities of the issues under consideration. He stated that whatever Council recommended, and agreed by the Minister, a clear Communications Strategy was required for schools. The Chief Executive agreed that this would be developed for all stakeholders.

Members commended the detail of the paper, sought and received clarification on a wide range of matters, these included :

- was any research in Candidates' performance across subjects i.e. candidates who fail GCSE English but pass other subjects answered in English?
- Could Use of English be part of marking in future?

These would be addressed outside of the meeting.

A Council member asked that the information be issued as soon as possible after the consultation period to allow staff to plan accordingly. The Chief Executive said that the Consultation would set out the direction of travel and would also assist in communicating to the section, however took on board the point that the earlier the information can be available the more beneficial it would be for school management to provide a stable environment for which the children can return to school.

Formal approval

Members were content to approve the proposals to go forward to DE. Formally proposed by Mrs Kathleen O'Hare and seconded by Mrs Paula Leitch.

5 Regulation

Regulatory Conditions for General Qualifications under Covid-19 Arrangements CB/21July/02

The Head of Regulation presented the changes required to the General Conditions of Recognition in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated health restrictions. She confirmed no issues of concern and the changes to CCEA's GCoR were in line with Ofqual and Qualifications Wales.

She confirmed that the Appeals procedure was critical and CCEA's framework was similar that adopted by Qualifications Wales.

Members were content with the information provided. The changes were formally proposed by Dr Les Caul, and seconded by Dr Ana Kerr.

6 Corporate

2020-21 Draft Operational/Business Plan

CB/21July/03

The DoFCS drew attention to the information provided and advised that a significant amount of work had been carried out prior to the Covid-19 restrictions being put in place from March 2020. Subsequently the work had been realigned to take account of the current situation, and corporate targets have changed as a result of the impact of Covid-19 health restrictions. She stated that the current circumstances impacted significantly on CCEA's business and this has been highlighted to DE.

She advised that DE had added an additional corporate goal to ensure continuity of learning for children and young people under the Covid-19 pandemic.

A draft has been submitted to DE for consideration and feedback is due towards the end of July.

The Chair asked if it would be possible for a revised draft to come forward to the Council business on 5 August 2020.

Members noted the information provided.

7 Any Other Business

None identified.

8 Date of Next Meeting

The Chair confirmed the Council business meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 5 August 2020 at 10 am, via MS teams.

He thanked members and officers for their contributions.