

CCEA

COUNCIL

Minutes of the ninety-sixth meeting of Council held on Wednesday 7 September 2011 at 10.00 am in Room 115, CCEA Headquarters, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present : Mrs H McClenaghan (Vice-Chair) Mr J Wilkinson
 Mr J Clarke Ms M Crilly
 Ms P O'Farrell

 Mr P Murray (DE Observer)

 Mr G Boyd (Interim Chief Executive)
 Mr M Quinn (Director, Corporate Services)
 Mr R Hanna (Director, Education Strategy)
 Ms AM Duffy (Director, Qualifications)
 Mr R McGune (Manager, Accreditation & Regulation)

 Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs D Black; Mr D Thompson; Mr J Collins and Mr A Arbuthnott.

2 Chair's Business

The Vice-Chair welcomed members to the meeting, in particular Mr Paul Murray, who was attending on behalf of Mr Adrian Arbuthnott from DE.

The minutes of the Accountability Review Meeting (4 July 2011) were tabled for members' information.

Education Committee : 29 June 2011

The Interim Chief Executive reported that he gave a presentation to the NI Assembly Education Committee on 29 June. This dealt with two issues :

- Breach of governance arrangements regarding pay for Senior Managers; and
- Internal Audit Report on hospitality and CCEA Council events.

He confirmed that following media coverage, he called 2 staff briefings to explain the circumstances and put the issues into context for staff. Feedback from staff had been very supportive.

Members were content with the way in which these matters had been handled by the Interim Chief Executive.

Freedom of Information Requests

Members were updated on the recent FOI requests.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 June 2011

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Mr Jim Clarke and seconded by Mr John Wilkinson as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

A copy was signed by the Vice-Chair.

Action Points

Members noted the status of the action points.

4 Correspondence

The Interim Chief Executive drew members' attention to the various items of correspondence received.

Delegated Authority Limits : 19 July 2011. He confirmed that DE is proposing to amend the Financial Memorandum/Management Statement. He expressed concern, however, that this could be a lengthy process.

The Vice-Chair agreed it would be appropriate to raise this at the next Accountability Review Meeting on 8 September 2011.

External Events and Associated Corporate Hospitality : 27 July 2011. The DoCS reported that a follow up visit from DE had been completed satisfactorily. He confirmed that all 3 actions have been undertaken and procedures put in place.

Members noted that the policies and practices would be reported to and monitored by the Audit & Risk Committee and Council kept up to date.

5 Governance and Accountability

Governance and Accountability Meeting : 4 July 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2011 were tabled for members' information. The Vice-Chair wished to place on record her thanks to the Interim Chief Executive and colleagues for the support papers and well informed contributions made by CCEA to the meeting.

8 September 2011

Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 8 September 2011.

6 Summer Examinations Series

The Vice-Chair welcomed Mr Roger McCune to the meeting.

The Director of Qualifications (DoQ) gave a presentation on :

- Market Share
- Entries
- Overall results

A copy of the presentation was issued to members' for information.

Market Share

Members commended the DoQ and her team for the work carried out to increase market share at GCSE and GCE Level.

Entries

The DoQ reported that overall entries in GCSE and GCE had risen by 2.9% and 2.6% respectively. This was mainly due to students taking more subjects and higher stay-on rates in 6th form.

Whilst members recognised this was positive for CCEA, concern was expressed at the number of subjects children were being asked to study at GCSE.

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that the base measure remained 5 GCSE's including English and Mathematics. However the Entitlement Framework (including Skills) will widen the range of options available for young people.

Clarification was sought on how CCEA would take part in the consultation on potential changes to GCSEs. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that CCEA would make a submission which would be discussed by the Education Committee and Council.

Issue of Results

The DoQ advised that CCEA candidates continue to perform strongly at GCE and GCSE level with a slight decrease in performance at AS level.

She confirmed that the portfolio would continue to be reviewed to ensure CCEA had sufficient qualifications to support the Entitlement Framework.

Malpractice

Members noted that the number of malpractice cases had decreased in 2011.

Examination Paper Errors

The DoQ reported on the errors that occurred in 2 live examination papers. Members were content with the immediate remedial action taken and noted that all of the issues had been dealt with.

The Regulation & Accreditation Manager reported that Government has asked for an investigation to be carried out across all awarding bodies on the errors that occurred in the Summer 2011 examinations. An interim report was expected towards the end of October.

Council members wished to place on record their congratulations to the DoQ and her team for all of the work completed during the examinations season and asked for this to be passed on to the teams.

The Vice-Chair paid tribute to the entire staff of the organisation who continued to operate at a very high level despite the adverse media coverage during this time.

On-Line Access to Examination Results

The Interim Chief Executive tabled information showing the locations from where students accessed their results and student feedback from an on-line survey on accessibility and friendliness of the system. He paid tribute to the members of the ICT team, and all others who worked hard to provide this service.

NI Predictor vs UK Predictor

The Interim Chief Executive reported that NFER report has identified a number of issues for CCEA which required further discussion and consideration. This is a complex area and it was agreed that further work would be carried out. The outcomes of this work will be reported to Council once completed.

The DE Observer confirmed that, if, as a result of further work, CCEA was proposing to make any changes in the awarding processes, a formal submission would have to be reviewed by the Minister before a final decision was reached.

The DoQ advised that OfQual would publish the NFER report in the Autumn term.

7 Any Other Business

None identified.

8 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed for Wednesday 19 October 2011 at 10.00 am.

The Vice-Chair thanked members and officers for their contributions to the meeting.