

on behalf of the Council, his best wishes and thanks to David for his immense contribution during his time with CCEA.

Business Committee had discussed and agreed that the organisation would proceed to fill the vacancies of Director of Corporate Services and Director of Education Policy to strengthen the Senior Management Team. These posts would be advertised in the context of CCEA's future existence and in light of RPA. The Department of Education supported this decision.

The Chairman indicated that the following officers would be in attendance from Item 5 onwards:

Mr Richard Hanna and Ms Carmel Gallagher – Curriculum & Assessment
Mr Roger McCune and Mrs Jenny Scharf – Regulation & Qualifications

Minutes of the Curriculum & Assessment Committee (8 February) and Business Committee (15 February) were tabled and discussed under Item 4.

3 Minutes of previous meetings 16 November and 21 December 2005

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2005 were approved and a copy signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman reported that all action points arising had been dealt with.

The record of the workshop held on 21 December 2005 was approved and a copy signed by the Chairman.

4 Committees

(a) Regulation & Qualifications Committee : 11 January 2006

Professor Roebuck, Chairman of the Committee updated members on the following:

14-19 Curriculum/Qualifications Development : Developments in England continue to be monitored. Our objective is to ensure that what was in place here was right for learners in Northern Ireland and at the same time has currency elsewhere in the UK. Whilst much of the thinking on the White Paper was in line with curriculum and qualifications policy in Northern Ireland, real concerns have been expressed regarding the proposals for GCE and GCSE changes.

- Specialised diplomas – it was agreed that these would only be of value to users if they had the support and recognition of employers and higher education.
- Functional skills – there was support for these to be integrated within GCSE specifications and the nature of assessment to be fit for purpose.
- GCE/GCSEs – the concept of unitised GCSEs was welcomed. However, there was little support for the General GCSE diploma for awarding and certification reasons.

GCSE Developments : Revision of specifications content will be carried out in alignment with the new curriculum objectives and will be up to date and relevant.

GCSE Science : Feedback from the consultation on proposed changes indicated that centres wished to maintain the current Double Award provision to ensure the best basis for

progression to level 3 courses. Further work would be carried out to ensure GCSE provision was in line with curriculum thinking.

Credit Developments : Good progress to date. ACCAC have linked into the testing and trialling programme and will be involved in future planning work (to ensure a 3 country approach). An implementation group will be established to facilitate the dissemination of information about credit developments to a wide range of practitioners.

Regulation of Qualifications Policy: Work has begun on a review of the regulation of qualifications. The aim is to promote a more strategic approach to regulation. This is work in progress and will be brought back to Council through the Committee as appropriate.

The Chairman reported that Items 10-12 were received well by the Committee and provided assurances and confidence in the operations of CCEA examinations.

Members expressed concern and dissatisfaction at the proposed changes at GCSE Science and sought assurances that science standards would be maintained at both GCSE and GCE level. The Chief Executive assured members that all of the concerns have been taken on board and if necessary an approach to the Department of Education would be made with a view to having a separate qualification for Northern Ireland to maintain these standards.

Mr Clarke said it was important to bear in mind that for children to have a good learning experience in subjects such as science, modern languages and mathematics the development of up to date, modern and interesting specifications was essential as was the marketing and selling of the subjects.

The Chief Executive agreed that this would be taken forward and that some form of communication would be issued to ensure schools have a full understanding of what the statutory requirements are and what actually needs to be taught to ensure progression.

(b) Learning for Life and Work Sub-Committee : 18 January 2006

Dr Lennon, Chairman of the Committee, reported that a huge amount of work continued in the following areas:

- Dungannon/Cookstown Initiative – very successful programme to date which was due to finish mid-February. A full evaluation report would be provided in due course.
- Certificate of Business Enterprise – a new qualification has been accredited at Levels 2 and 3 and a successful trial completed in colleges.
- Future Search : a 3-day consultative forum has been organised by DE and DEL to draw up an action plan for Careers provision for all learners. CCEA will be represented by Cecil Holmes and a report on the outcomes of the event will be given to the *committee* at its May meeting.

The main focus of the meeting was around the review of specifications for GCSES in relation to learning for life and work and the need for mechanisms for the appropriate people to feed into the content to ensure the specifications are up to date, modern and relevant.

(c) Curriculum and Assessment Committee : 8 February 2006

Dr Mulryne, Chairman of the Committee reported on the following :

Spelling Research; Early Childhood Interventions and Literacy Developments : It was agreed that the research seminar which took place on 23 January would be repeated to bring the new Council members up to date with work in this area.

- *Pupil Profile* : the Minister had agreed the pupil profile approach and to the trialling which would take place later on in the year. Members were satisfied with the robustness of the INCAS system but wished to seek further clarification on the functionality of ALTA.
- *INCAS trials* : initial feedback from whole school trials was generally positive, but issues around accessibility; teacher training, time and administration, still needed to be addressed.
- *Citizenship evaluation* : interim report had been received by the committee. The evaluation would continue to be monitored closely to ensure the outcomes set at the beginning of the project are achieved. The Chairman recommended that this be reviewed by the Council as appropriate.
- *Proposal for further primary movement research* : committee considered a proposal for further research into the effect of social deprivation on the early development of motor and language skills of P1 children. The committee decided that this was more relevant to the 0-6 agenda and asked officers to investigate the benefits and connections internally with a view to suggesting to the researchers other appropriate organizations.

Members agreed that this proposal could be developed and sent to the Department of Education, but CCEA would not be the sole sponsor of further research in this area.

Dr Mulryne wished to place on record his thanks to the committee members who had given a substantial amount of time, commitment and expertise to the issues debated and to the supporting officers who had completed a tremendous amount of work particularly in the areas of research; the new Curriculum and more recently the Pupil Profile.

(c) Business Committee : 15 February 2006

Dr Lennon, Chairman of the Committee, drew members' attention to the tabled minutes. He reported that the meeting focussed on finances, budgets and performance against the operational plan.

The following updates were given:

Media attention : the Chairman and Chief Executive responded to correspondence in the Belfast Telegraph. (Members had been provided with copies of the responses). The Chairman has subsequently spoken to one of the authors of recently published letters and offered to meet with him.

RPA : The Chairman had written to the Permanent Secretary outlining the concerns CCEA has with some aspects of work, particularly in relation to curriculum implementation and the need to ensure the interfaces are managed correctly and effectively. This issue will be raised again.

The Chief Executive reported that :

- Mr Robson Davidson has been appointed Deputy Secretary; and Mr Chris Stewart, a new Assistant Secretary has been appointed to assist with the RPA process.

- Mrs Christine Jendoubi has moved to the Department of Health taking up a role in the area of Primary Care.

In terms of ongoing work:

- a strategic planning meeting of all education partners has taken place and a number of work streams have been identified;
- a series of bilateral meetings has been set up – curriculum implementation and pupil profile have been put on the agenda going forward.

The Department of Education has also agreed to move the responsibility of interfacing with business and education to CCEA and discussions are ongoing as to how this will be achieved.

- A CRM (Customer Relations Management) project is underway to find an agreed approach of improving contacts and links with all stakeholders in a consistent and corporate manner. The programme will be fully embedded by April 2007.
- EFQM progress report was given and it was noted Charter Mark reaccreditation was achieved on 26 January 2006.

Members stressed the need to continue seek clarification on CCEA's position in the context of RPA as much as possible going forward. The Chairman said he had written to the Minister following the RPA announcement regarding the role of the CCEA Council as a 'think tank', and confirmed that the bilateral meetings would provide the opportunities for CCEA to give an input alongside its other education partners.

(e) Audit & Risk Committee : 15 February 2006

Mr Collins, Chairman of the Committee, reported that there were no major issues for concern. He updated members on the following :

- Internal auditors had changed to Ernst Young (appointed by CCEA). External auditors had changed to Pricewaterhousecoopers (appointed by the Audit Office).
- The Chairman had met privately with Ernst Young which was a requirement of the Committee.
- Purchase Order non-compliances would be monitored carefully going forward. The Audit Office representative stressed the need for robust processes to monitor compliance.
- Risk Management self assessment of the Council's arrangements from October 2005 to January 2006: a 100% response had been received from Committee members.
- Audit & Risk training for new members of Council was recommended by the Committee.

5 Finance & Planning

Finance report and expenditure at end January 2006

C/61/1

Mr Mulholland said there were no major issues of concern and reported that:

- Examinations income : £375K more than budgeted with further increases forecast;
- Baseline budgets had been increased due to DE confirmation that £236K of excess income may be applied to in-year budgetary pressures;
- Baseline expenditure in line with budget – under spent by 1%; and
- Projects remain under spent, however, plans have been put in place to ensure these are brought back into line with forecasts for the end of the financial year.

A further £75K - £100K of examinations income was forecast with multi media and other sources of income ahead of budget at this time.

Expenditure : the majority of business units are operating with small year to date variances, however overspends in ICT, PSE and CEO are due to actual timing of expenditure. These will be addressed to ensure no major variations at year end.

Capital is in line with budget year to date with no major concerns to report.

The Chairman thanked Mr Mulholland for the update and reminded members that Business Committee had discussed the finances in detail at its last meeting.

Budget 2006/2007

C/61/2

Mr Mulholland reported that the first draft budget was submitted to the Department of Education by 30 November 2005. Following requests for additional information (including Curriculum & Assessment and the revision of GCE and GCSE specifications) a revised and more detailed budget was submitted on 3 February 2006.

The Chief Executive said it was possible that additional regulatory functions would be incorporated into CCEA. Budgetary provision for this would be subject to DE approval.

Members approved the budget for 2006/2007.

Mr Woods confirmed that the letter of budget approval would be issued as soon as possible.

Corporate Plan Update

C/61/3

Mr Mulholland reported that the corporate plan was due for renewal to reflect the period 2006-2007 and roll forward to 2008-2009. He updated members on the current status of the process, and outlined the 3 main sources as follows :

- (i) Internal review by the Senior Management Team. The latest review identified the need for the plan to reflect the following priorities :
 - Implementation of the curriculum;
 - Delivery of pupil profile;
 - Revision of GCSE and GCE specifications;
 - Contribute and respond to the 14-19 qualification developments/changes;
 - Examinations modernisation;
 - RPA; and
 - Business development and market share.
- (ii) Direction provided by the DE Strategic Plan. In reviewing CCEA's corporate plan there is a need to demonstrate clear linkages between the two plans and the overall DE strategic aims. Mr Mulholland drew attention to the table which outlined examples of the areas where clear links can be identified.

- (iii) Direction provided by Council based on drafts being revised, reviewed and endorsed by Business Committee.

Mr Mulholland drew members' attention to the 'next steps' detailed in paper C/61/3 and reported that Business Committee would review a revised version of the plan at its next meeting before presenting it to Council for approval at its meeting in May.

Mr Clarke suggested that the reference to RPA reflect the staffing element in the Corporate Plan. It was agreed that this would be taken on board.

Members expressed concern at the effect the recent media attention around the Pupil Profile had concentrated on CCEA when the Pupil Profile as a policy was in fact owned by the Department of Education. It was suggested that this be raised with the Permanent Secretary at the next bilateral meeting to raise awareness of this issue and to discuss an appropriate communication programme going forward.

The Chairman noted the comments. He confirmed that CCEA would only comment in general terms on the pupil profile but would not discuss policy development. He agreed that there was a need to be clear about CCEA's role and sought assurances that every effort would be made to achieve this. The Chief Executive confirmed that this would be the case.

Operational plan exception report at end December 2005

C/61/4

Mr Mulholland drew members' attention to the detail of the report outlined in paper C/61/4. Out of a total of 578 performance measure 550 were either complete or on target. 26 were incomplete.

Improvements suggested by Committee included :

- Quality of comments to be more meaningful and explicit;
- Identification of level of risk associated with being behind target and appropriate weightings attached; and
- Remedial action plans to be incorporated.

Mr Mulholland confirmed that these improvements had been taken into consideration.

Members noted the information provided and the Chairman thanked Mr Mulholland for his contributions to the meeting.

6 Curriculum and Assessment

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Scharf, Ms Gallagher, Mr Hanna and Mr McCune to the meeting.

Pupil Profile Update

C/61/5

The Chairman reminded members that a substantial amount of development work had taken place since the last meeting of Council. He tabled an additional paper entitled 'What is the Pupil Profile?' to ensure members were clear in terms of the content of the pupil profile and the current position.

Ms Gallagher spoke to the detail of paper C/61/5 which outlined the:

- current position on the development of the pupil profile;

- design of the profile;
- preparation and timescales for trialling; and
- latest position regarding software development using CARN.

The Chief Executive confirmed that this was in line with what was discussed and agreed by Council at the workshop on 21 December 2005. He reported that he had met and discussed the development work with the Minister in detail. Further discussions will take place with the Department on 7 March to deal with workload and presentational issues.

The major challenge over the next 6 months is to ensure the ICT interface is as user friendly as possible for teachers given the timeframe.

The Chairman sought clarification on the technological contingency plan regarding delivery of the profile. Mr Hanna said that there were 3 software applications required for the delivery of the pupil profile. Further work was required to develop the connectivity and integration of these products.

Discussions have taken place with C2K and are ongoing regarding the ICT aspects in the delivery of the pupil profile.

The Chief Executive assured members that work was in progress to ensure the tools for the complete technical package were compatible and as user friendly as possible. Work will continue in this area with C2K and the Department of Education.

Dr Murray sought assurances that the suggestion of a quotient for SEN children be included.

Dr Mulryne asked when the information regarding the style and trialling of the pupil profile would be in the public domain. The Chairman said that representations had been made to the Department to make this public as quickly as possible.

The Chief Executive commented that once the further trialling was under way in schools it would effectively be in the public domain. He stressed the importance of ensuring that all communication in connection with the Pupil profile was consistent and effective.

The Chairman asked that the Council be updated regularly on developments regarding the pupil profile and stressed the importance of the Pupil Profile being acceptable to teachers and parents. He also reminded members that whatever is finally agreed upon following trials in schools would be subject to feedback reports and final advice would be signed off formally by the Council before being presented to the Minister.

Members were broadly content with the current position.

Curriculum Update

C/61/6

Ms Gallagher drew members' attention to the detail of paper C/61/6. She reported on the initial feedback from the evaluations of the implementation which had been collected from 4 focus groups (34 primary and post-primary principals). The following key issues needed to be addressed:

- Communication : a clear understanding of the big picture and detailed information of what is planned;
- Policy decisions : clarity on timing to enable schools to plan effectively;
- The level of support that will be made available to schools and funding of resources by schools; and
- How the assessment will be used in practice at age 11.

Ms Gallagher confirmed that these issues had been raised with PMB and work was underway to address these. A further update would be given at the next meeting of Council.

Mr Clarke said it was important that some thought be given to the appointment or secondment of a regional co-ordinator to take ownership. The Chief Executive agreed there was a need for a project manager to oversee this.

The Chairman asked that this be pursued with the Department of Education.

Proposals for the World Around Us at key Stage 1 & 2

C/61/7

The Chairman sought clarification as to whether or not there were significant changes. Ms Gallagher reported that following discussions with science specialists and other support personnel (including Board officers), a more positive attitude to connected learning was emerging hence the proposal that the changes be organised under 'big ideas', detailed in Appendix 1 of the paper.

The Chairman sought an assurance that the changes were consistent with the feedback from the consultation. Ms Gallagher confirmed that this was the case.

Mr Clarke asked that the terminology of 'big ideas' be looked at and the use of the word 'interdependence' be addressed, following the proposed changes by the Curriculum & Assessment Committee.

Subject to these changes, members agreed the proposals.

7 Regulation & Qualifications

14-19 Update

C/61/8

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Scharf and Mr McCune to the meeting.

Mr McCune reported on the development work underway in England and drew particular attention to the implications for Northern Ireland. He drew members' attention to the detail of paper C/61/8 and outlined the work done to date in the following areas:

Specialised diplomas

Diploma development partnerships have been set up to advise on content/assessment arrangements for 2008 (these include employers and representatives from awarding bodies and higher education).

Functional skills

Core elements of English, Mathematics and ICT have been defined as Functional Skills.

A consultation on the draft standards will take place in March 2006 with a view to standards being agreed by May 2006.

GCE

Trials/pilots of different approaches to the introduction of stretch within A2 will take place in England this summer. Evaluation reports will be available in October 2006.

Proposals for the revised GCE subject criteria will be consulted upon in Northern Ireland in late March.

GCSE

Discussions are underway on how best GCSE changes can support the broader changes, such as the Entitlement Framework.

Professor Roebuck sought clarification on the 'Lines of Learning' (page 2 of the paper). Mr McCune confirmed that these would be flexible. However one element within the diploma would be a requirement for apprenticeships. DEL has been informed about this.

Mr Woods reported that DE and DEL have been working on a remit letter. Further clarification is required to ensure the commissioning letter can be submitted.

He assured members that the Department would be seeking to ensure that taking account of what is happening in England the main focus would be on providing what is best, appropriate and fit for purpose in the Northern Ireland context, whilst at the same time having currency outside of Northern Ireland.

Members welcomed developments in this area.

Mr Collins asked that other educational interests and employers be included in the debate and consultations going forward.

Mrs Scharf asked members to bear in mind that GCSE qualifications would be accredited by QCA and therefore it would be necessary for new specifications to match the new accreditation criteria.

The Chairman said it was essential to be robust in the qualifications development to ensure distinctive qualifications with relevant, up to date, modern and fit for purpose specifications.

8 Any other business

The Chairman thanked members for their contributions throughout the meeting and once again recognised the excellent contributions of John, Anne, Wilfred and Brian to the work of the organisation and thanked them on behalf of the Council.

9 Date of next meeting

The first meeting of the reconstituted Council will take place on Wednesday 3 May 2006, at 10 am, in CCEA.

Chairman

Date