

CCEA

Minutes of the one hundred and thirty first meeting of Council held on Wednesday 12 December 2018 at 10.00 am in Room 115, 1st Floor, 29 Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present : Mr T Carson (Chair) Dr N Morton
 Mr R Thompson Mrs C Harpur
 Dr L Caul Dr A Kerr
 Mr C McKinney Mrs K O'Hare

Ms A Evans (Chair, Qualifications Wales)

Mr J Edwards (Chief Executive)
Mrs L Scott (Director of Finance & Corporate Services)
Ms M Farragher (Director of Education)
Mr R McCune (Head of Regulation)
Ms R Kennedy (Business Manager Curriculum & Assessment – Item 7)
Ms A Swann (Business Manager Qualifications – Item 7)

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

Introduction

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting. He welcomed Ms Ann Evans, Chair of Qualifications Wales. Ms Evans would speak to the Council before formal business.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Rosemary Cowan, Mrs Carol Fitzsimons and Mr Brian Wilson.

Guest Speaker

The Chair introduced and gave a brief pen portrait of Ms Evans.

Ms Evans thanked the Chair for the opportunity to join the Council meeting and gave an overview of her experiences in :

- Setting up a new organisation
- Challenges that Qualifications Wales have dealt with and continue to deal with
- The importance of great governance

Members discussed matters of mutual interest and welcomed the positive debate.

The Chair, on behalf of Council, thanked Ms Evans for her input into the meeting. He suggested that perhaps Ms Evans and a representative from SQA may be invited to participate in a future Council Development Session. This would be progressed outside of the meeting.

Mrs Harpur left the meeting at this point.

Main Business

2 Declaration of Interests

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

3 Chair's Business

Chatham House Rules/Confidentiality

The Chair reminded members that all matters pertaining to Council business are conducted under Chatham House Rules and asked for confidentiality to be observed at all times.

Chair's Report to Council

The Chair gave an overview of the range of activities undertaken since the last Council meeting. This included :

- A number of meetings with CCEA HR and employment solicitor in regards pay remit issues.
- A series of meetings with senior officials from the Department of Education and Department for the Economy.
- Attendance at a number of events to include the Policy Forum Conference and the launch of the Chief Inspector's Report.

He thanked Dr Morton for attending the CIPFA Leadership and Governance Conference held on 27 November on his behalf. Council members who attended the event confirmed it was beneficial.

Meetings with the Chief Executive: The Chair confirmed that regular 1-1 meetings with the Chief Executive continued (on a fortnightly basis) to monitor effectiveness and seek assurances on the operations of the organisation. Updates were also provided by the Chief Executive on matters not included on the 1-1 agendas as appropriate.

Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive (CE) drew attention to the information provided and updated members on activity since the last meeting. This included:

Curriculum & Assessment

- The provision of a range of teacher professional development opportunities for Digital Skills, Primary Numeracy and KS3 Maths with attendance at digital skills events being particularly popular.
- The KS3 Maths Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) pilot is ongoing with 3227 tests completed to date. It will conclude in January 2019.
- Collaboration with the Education Authority in regards to Shared Education (SE) continues with the launch of a web hub and the development of a Shared Education pupil pathway to illustrate how SE outcomes could be delivered in a range of curriculum contexts.

He was pleased to announce that CCEA won two top UK awards for its STEM in Minecraft Resource.

Examinations

- The final set of results for Essential Skills were issued to candidates on 13 December 2018. This qualification has now been withdrawn.
- November Science examinations series was in progress. All papers were taken with no errors identified.
- The review of RQF qualifications has recommended that 10 of the 12 qualifications be withdrawn.
- Moving Image Arts Showcase Awards have taken place.

The Chair of the Education Committee commended this achievement and encouraged the award to be replicated for other subjects if appropriate. Council members also endorsed this award.

- Formative assessments for digital skills are under development and will be piloted in February and March 2019.

A Council member asked if consideration could be given to holding the November series examinations later in the month to allow sufficient time for teachers and pupils to prepare. The Director of Education advised that a group of principals had been asked to provide advice on the timetable for 2019 (in addition to the consultation). She confirmed that the request would be considered.

Regulation

- CCEA's revised GCSE qualifications will be first awarded in Summer 2019. Implementation of the Communications Plan continues to ensure all stakeholders are fully aware of the substantive nature of the changes.
- Work is underway with the Awarding Organisation and regulators in England and Wales to prepare for the GCSE and A Level awards in Summer 2019.
- Developments on the new T-Levels in England continues to be monitored and reported on as appropriate.

A Council member stated it was important to continue the discussion around T-Levels to ensure CCEA was in a position to respond if required by government departments to do so.

Corporate

- Re-accreditation of ISO 27001.
- Multi-media won two awards at the 2018 Learning Technology awards.
- All Managers have been trained on the new Performance Review System. Awareness sessions and training is currently being provided to all CCEA staff.

FOI Requests

Members noted the most recent FOI requests.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 October 2018

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 October 2018 were proposed by Dr Neill Morton and seconded by Mrs Kathleen O'Hare as a true and accurate record. A copy was available for the Chair to sign.

Action points

Members noted the status of the action points and were updated on the following:

- *Sub-group : governance arrangements for Regulation* : The Chief Executive confirmed that the first meeting had taken place, the terms of reference had been agreed, and a proposal would come forward to the next meeting of Council for consideration.
- *Vocational qualifications to be included on agenda for Education Committee* : The Director of Education confirmed that she had discussed the matter with the Chair of the Education Committee and agreed that there would be opportunities for this during 2019/20.
- *CSC Leaders Programme* : the Chair tabled the paper from the Chief Executive in regards to his learning experiences of the programme. He suggested that if members required further information they should approach the Chief Executive outside of the meeting.
- *Education : Information session to explore awarding process and regulatory function to be organised* : this would be progressed during 2019.
- Insights Report for 2018 will be issued once finalised.

5 Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence :

- 2018/19 Resource Budget – CCEA Review of Relations and Sexuality Education (RSE) Resources
- 2018/19 Resource Budget – CCEA Review of Relations and Sexuality Education (RSE) Resources : Work Plan and Financial Profile
- 2018/19 Revised Capital Budget Allocation and CE Response
- TSN Planner – Video Resource
- PSTF : Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) for non-teaching staff and CE Response
- UK Learning Technology Awards
- Approval of Business Case for Seidean Si Mobile App

The Chief Executive drew attention to the correspondence in regards to the VES and advised that the scheme had been launched and will follow the same process as previous years. He confirmed that the Finance Committee and Council would be informed of the outcomes as per normal practice.

A Council member suggested that moving forwards correspondence of a non-operational nature be reported to the Council. The Chief Executive welcomed this and agreed, on the basis that if any other correspondence he feels Council should be aware of is included. Members were content with this approach.

6 Governance and Accountability

The Chair confirmed that the minutes of the GAR meeting were not yet available. He provided an overview of the main items discussed, these included:

- Financial Management
- Corporate Governance/Business Performance : to include Business Plan 2018/19 and Risk Management;
- Other Accountability or Governance Issues
- First Day Planning for BREXIT

The minutes would be circulated to members once available.

7 Education

The Chair welcomed the Business Managers for Qualifications and Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting to the meeting.

Education Committee Report : 10 October 2018

The Chair of the Committee drew attention to the detail of the minutes and reported on the following :

Qualifications

- BREXIT Planning : members received an overview of the main areas within Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment that may be impacted upon in relation to planning for BREXIT.
- English Literature Review & Action Plan : 24 out of the 26 recommendations arising from the reviews had been closed out with 2 in progress.
- Review of Summer Examinations : members received a detailed presentation on the key components of the summer series (previously presented to Council at its October meeting).
- Draft Policy for Qualifications Provision : members considered a draft policy. A further draft would come forward before presentation to Council for ratification.

Members also received an update on technological advancements to the services provided by the Examinations Administration business unit.

Curriculum & Assessment

- Assessment Developments 2018/19 : members discussed a paper on options for the future of key stage assessment.

- CCEA Support for Schools 2018/19 : members noted the planned support for 2018/19 and the statistics for centres attending support events.
- Digital Skills Progression Pathways Framework for KS3 : members noted the approach CCEA has adopted in relation to digital skills development for schools, in particular a framework for KS3.

The Chair of the Committee thanked officers for the significant amount of work and quality of the papers presented to the Committee.

A Council member welcomed the inclusion of Key Stage 2 in the area of assessment.

This concluded the Education Committee report to Council.

For Information

Curriculum Monitoring

C/131/1

The Chair reminded members that discussions on this item had begun at the Council development day.

The Director of Education introduced this item and provided an overview of the detail provided in paper C/131/1. She outlined the purpose, focus and process of the monitoring programme and confirmed that :

- Opportunities would be provided for internal discussion across the Education Directorate, and an annual meeting is being planned with key stakeholders to review individual subjects with subject specialists as required.
- Summary reports from each area will be used to contribute to monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum, and to ensure a state of readiness should CCEA be asked to carry out a review.
- 2019 will be used to trial this approach with staff to achieve maximum effectiveness for the programme.

The Business Manager, Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting outlined the range of activities planned and recapped on discussions at the Council workshop (detail provided on pages 2 and 3).

The presentation outlined :

- CCEA's Statutory Remit
- Curriculum Design
- Curriculum Review from 1999 – the Big Picture in 2007
- Where are we now : Step Change : A new approach for schools in N.I. (CBI 2014)
- Top 10 Skills 2015 and 2020
- International Comparisons
- UNESCO : What makes a quality curriculum?
- The Curriculum Cycle
- Pace and Amount of Change
- Implications

Members raised a number of points for progressing, in particular :

- Sufficient funding/resources together with a structure and vision from the relevant government department(s) are required to carry out monitoring work on the curriculum to ascertain what needs to be done to ensure a fit for purpose curriculum.
- Continue with gathering feedback from the full range of stakeholders. Benchmark against all areas and reflect on the curriculum as it is now. Use this information to sharpen the focus on what should be revised/reinvigorated to bring areas up to date as required.
- Continue to engage with the Department of Education to ensure awareness is raised on CCEA's statutory responsibility to monitor the Northern Ireland Curriculum and review the curriculum, assessment and qualifications.

Members welcomed the fact that one of the key components of the exercise is school visits with face to face meetings across a representative spread of schools being conducted by both qualifications and curriculum officers.

Mrs O'Hare left the meeting at this point.

It was suggested that the information gathered be presented to DE with a view to obtaining funding. The Chair confirmed that it was his expectation that all of the evidence gathered would be presented to DE in a meaningful way once requested.

A Council member expressed confusion at the range of different initiatives underway in the Education sector and sought clarification on where CCEA's work fits into that of the Innovation Lab. The Chair confirmed that he had written to the Department of Education (DE) asking for representation on the Steering Group of the Transformation Programme. The Chief Executive agreed that this would be important to enable CCEA to contribute effectively to decision making and appropriate discussions in advance of work commissioned by DE in regards to the review of the next generation of the curriculum.

The Chief Executive advised that as well as sufficient funding and resources, external expertise would also be required. He agreed that this work would provide baseline evidence to allow Council to formulate proposals for DE consideration should the need arise.

The Chair asked for further updates to come forward to Council as appropriate.

The Head of Regulation left the meeting at this point.

The agenda was re-ordered to take paper **C/131/3** at this point in the meeting.

NET Detractor Non-GCSE Qualifications

C/131/3

The Chair confirmed that the Finance Committee had considered this item in detail at its meeting on 5 December 2018 and recommended the proposal to come forward to Council for ratification.

The Chief Executive drew attention to paper C/131/3 and confirmed that a full review had been carried out with cost benefit analysis provided on the rationale for each of the proposals to withdraw the qualifications.

The Director of Education (DoE) confirmed that it was important to ascertain why the qualifications are not successful, and use the feedback to reinvigorate and repurpose CCEA's offering to make them more attractive and fit for purpose for learners.

Clarification was sought and received on the candidature for languages and an assurance was provided that options would be progressed.

The recommendations to withdraw 9 out of the 10 qualifications was formally proposed by Dr Ana Kerr and seconded by Dr Les Caul.

The Chair wished to place on record his thanks to the Business Manager, Qualifications for the significant amount of work completed in the detailed cost benefit analysis provided to the Finance Committee.

The Chair reverted to the normal running of the agenda at this point in the meeting.

Malpractice : Lessons Learned

C/131/2

The DoE drew attention to the detail of paper C/131/2 and outlined the range of suggested improvements following a review of CCEA's practice in managing Malpractice. She advised that it was important to have sufficient resources to fulfil the function and a new staffing structure would be put in place taking account of lessons learned from recent malpractice.

Members sought and received clarification on a number of matters. A Council member expressed concern about maintaining the confidentiality of assessment materials over a prolonged period. The DoE advised that this matter was being progressed with the sector, with a view to providing a more pragmatic approach.

Chair of the Education Committee commended the detail of the information provided.

The Chair thanked members and officers for their input into this item.

Draft Response : Ofqual Music Consultation

C/131/4

Members were content with the information provided. The draft response was formally proposed by Mr Trevor Carson and seconded by Dr Neill Morton.

8 Regulation

The Head of Regulation returned to the meeting at this point.

Regulatory Advisory Committee Report : Meeting held on 17 October 2018

In the absence of Dr Davidson, Chair of the Committee, the Chair of Council drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided.

He reported on the following:

- *Presentation on Summer Series : GCSE and A/AS Level Achievements* : members received a detailed presentation on the summer examination series (previously presented to Council on 3 October 2018).
- *Comparability of Examination Standards* : members discussed and sought clarification on a number of matters in regards to the comparability of standards across the 3 Countries.
- *GCSE Grading Communications Update* : (on the agenda for this meeting). Members received an update on plans to increase the levels of awareness through established channels of communication.

- *Update on Traineeship (Level 2) & Apprenticeship (Level 3) developments in Northern Ireland (N.I.)* : members discussed and sought clarification on recent developments in this area.
- *Risks Associated with T Levels and Qualifications Reform in England* : the risks associated with the T-Level programme (should it not become available in N.I.) were discussed. Members welcomed the engagement between the CE and Department for the Economy (DoE) who asked the CE to monitor the situation and develop a range of options for consideration.
- *Risks to provision for Learners in Northern Ireland*: Members were content with the actions introduced to mitigate against potential risk to the provision of Technical and Professional qualifications for learners in N.I.
- *Teachers as Examiners*: (on the agenda for this meeting). Following discussion, members were content for the recommendations to come forward to Council for further consideration.

Members also received copies of the Monitoring and Compliance Strategy, and the Annual Statement of Compliance 2017.

This concluded the report of the Regulatory Advisory Committee to Council.

A Council member sought clarification in regards to the risk around safeguarding. The Chief Executive confirmed that this is recorded in the Corporate Risk Register under Public Confidence. He assured members that this area would continue to be monitored and managed closely.

Members were content with the information provided.

For Approval

Teachers as Examiners : Safeguarding confidentiality where teachers are involved in developing assessments **C/131/5**

The Chief Executive introduced this item and reminded members of the background to the issue. He advised that as a result of the review of Teachers as Examiners a number of recommendations had come forward for consideration.

The Head of Regulation drew attention to the detail of the information provided in paper C/131/5 and gave an overview of the proposals provided.

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had been asked to be an observer on the JCQ independent commission into examination malpractice, chaired by Sir John Dunford. He advised that the Report would be considered by the Awarding Organisation (AO), as a member of JCQ.

Members agreed that the recommendations proposed were robust. An assurance was sought and received that changes would be implemented as proposed. The proposals were agreed, and formally proposed by Mr Robert Thompson and seconded by Dr Neill Morton.

For Information

Update on T-Level Developments

C/131/6

The Head of Regulation thanked members for their input into discussions on this matter at the Council Development Day on 8 November. He advised that the Department for Education in England had

recognised that there could be opportunities for both Northern Ireland and Wales to negotiate with Awarding Organisations for use of the T-Level qualifications as appropriate.

Members welcomed this development

Update on GCSE Grading Communications Plan

The Head of Regulation drew attention to the paper tabled for members' information, and provided an update on the range of work completed, and plans for raising awareness moving forwards.

Members noted the information provided.

9 Finance

Finance Committee Report : Meeting held on 5 December 2018

The Chair advised that the minutes had not yet been finalised and would be circulated to members once available. In the absence of Mrs Cowan, Chair of the Committee, he confirmed the committee had fulfilled its scrutiny and challenge function on all agenda items.

He reported on the following:

- *Finance Report as at 31 October 2018* : members noted an overspend of £258K and were content with the range of actions to manage the budget through to year end. Concern was expressed in regards to the financial risk and control around the payment of teacher release to schools.
- *Statement of Financial Position as at 31 October 2018* : the main issue remains increased pension liability.
- *Presentation on Inescapable pressures 2019/20* : members discussed the main issues in detail.
- *Corporate Plan : Monitoring Report : Quarter 2* : members were content with the information provided.

The above items were on the agenda for this meeting.

- *Pay Remit Update* : members noted the pay remits were in the final stages of review with DE. Revised guidance has also be issued advising that DE have delegated authority to pay remits to their designated ALBs.
- *Invigilation Rates of Pay* : members noted that this review had been completed.
- *Consideration of NET detractor non-general qualifications* : this item was considered by at paper C/131/3 (on the agenda for this meeting).
- *Procurement and Business Case Update* : One procurement is live with CPD. CCEA will also be involved in 3 collaborative procurement opportunities.

Two business cases were approved by the Finance Committee : Seidean Se Mobile App and Irish Medium Interactive Maths Tool.

- *Human Resources* : members received an update on the awareness sessions and training provided in advance of implementing the new Performance Review System.

Strategies and Policies

The Estates Strategy will continue as a standing item on the agenda until a suitable facility is found for CCEA post-2021. Members received an update on activity since the September meeting and continued to express concern at the slow progress.

The Conflict of Interests (Staff) Policy was approved by the committee.

A copy of the Governance and Accountability Arrangements for the oversight of ALBs was issued by the Department and was made available to members of the committee and Council.

This concluded the report of the Finance Committee to Council.

For Information

Finance Report as at 31 October 2018

C/131/7

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services (DoF&CS) drew attention to the detail provided and reported a current overspend of £285K (2.2%) outside DE's 1% target. She confirmed that this was a more positive position than reported at the October meeting, and advised that the majority of overspend had arisen through examinations conduct; these areas were being managed by the Director of Education and her budget holders.

The Capital budget was on target.

The Chair confirmed an updated position of 0.2% overspend and assured members that a range of actions would be undertaken to manage the financial position through to year-end.

He recognised the significant financial challenges the organisation will face moving into 2019/20.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 October 2018

C/131/8

Members noted the information provided.

Presentation on Inescapable Pressures 2019/20

The DoF&CS gave a detailed presentation (circulated to members for information) outlining an updated assessment of budget pressures for 2019/20. This included :

- Current cost pressures
- Summary of pressures
- Main non-salary pressures (by team/area)
- Initial mitigation measures
- Income
- Range of Fees (by provider)
- Next Steps

The Chair confirmed that a wide ranging discussion with robust challenge had taken place at the Finance Committee on 5 December, particularly in regards to additional income, increasing fees and future invigilation arrangements. The Chief Executive advised that no budget settlement had yet been received and the projections had been based on receiving a possible decrease in funding.

Clarification was sought on whether staff had been informed. The DoF&CS confirmed that the Union (JNC) was briefed on a regularly basis and this included an indication of the challenging financial environment CCEA continued to operate within. She advised that staff are aware of the financial challenges, however, there was no indication of any negative impact of staff morale.

A Council member said that staff morale was important, and suggested that this be monitored in view of the significant financial challenges ahead. The Chair confirmed that HR was a standing item on the Finance Committee and he would expect this to be brought to the committee's attention should any issues arise.

Members noted the information provided.

Planning and Performance

For Information

Operational Plan Monitoring Report : Quarter 2 : 2018/19

C/131/9

The DoF&CS drew attention to the detail of the information provided and reported on the second quarter of 2018/19.

Members noted the information provided.

10 Any Other Business

Formal Recognition UK Learning Technologies Award : STEM in Minecraft

The Chair advised that this item would be deferred to the Education Committee on Wednesday 6 February 2019. Council members would be invited to the demonstration of the resource.

He congratulated the officers involved in the production of the resource.

General

The Chair wished to place on record his appreciation and thanks to Council members for their significant contributions to the work of the Council and the additional workload on some members as a result of Council working with a reduced complement.

Tribute to Roger McCune

The Chair paid tribute to Mr Roger McCune for his significant contributions to the organisation in a variety of roles during his career at CCEA. Roger has conducted his business with the utmost professionalism, tact and diplomacy. He is diligent and genuine, his wealth of experience, expertise, knowledge and networking will not be replicated and is truly unrivalled. Roger is held in the very highest esteem by all of his colleagues, including his counterparts from Qualifications Wales, Ofqual and SQA.

On behalf of the Council, the Chair thanked Roger for continuing in his role so that the new Head of Regulation could avail of his skills and experience on the areas that may present significant challenges and risks and wished him well in his retirement.

Mr McCune thanked members and paid tribute to the Chairs and Chief Executives that he had worked for during his career in CCEA and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Dr Kerr wished to place on record her thanks to all staff for the significant amount of work undertaken throughout 2018. The Chair agreed to send out a Christmas message in advance of the Christmas break.

11 Date of the Next Meeting

The Chair confirmed that the next Council meeting was confirmed for Wednesday 20 March 2019 at 10 am.

A Council Development Session was also confirmed for Thursday 7 March 2019 9.30 – 3.30 pm.

He wished members a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

