

## **COUNCIL**

Minutes of the ninety-eighth meeting of Council held on Wednesday 14 December 2011 at 10.00 am in Room 115, CCEA, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

**Present :** Mrs H McClenaghan (Vice-Chair) Mr J Clarke  
Mrs D Black Ms M Crilly  
Mr J Wilkinson Mr D Thompson

Mr P Murray (DE Representative)

Mr G Boyd (Interim Chief Executive)  
Ms AM Duffy (Director of Qualifications)  
Mr M Quinn (Director of Corporate Services)  
Mr R Hanna (Director of Education Strategy)  
Mr J Daly (Finance Manager)  
Mr R McCune (Regulation & Accreditation Manager)  
Mr R Shilliday (Communications Manager) Item 2 only

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr A Arbuthnott, Ms P O'Farrell and Mr J Collins. *(Information redacted under s. 40 Personal information of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.)*

### **2 Chair's Business**

The Vice-Chair welcomed members to the meeting in particular Mr Paul Murray, who was deputising for Mr Arbuthnott, and Mr Robert Shilliday, MarComms Manager (Item 2 only).

Members were advised that a closed session of Council would be held at the end of normal business.

#### ***FOI Requests***

Members were updated on the recent FOI requests.

#### ***Press Coverage : Daily Telegraph Exams Story***

The Communications Manager briefed members on the recent extensive media coverage of the Daily Telegraph investigation into training seminars conducted by awarding bodies in England and Wales. Members viewed the video material posted as part of the investigation.

The Interim Chief Executive assured Council that CCEA's training seminars are led by CCEA staff and robust procedures and processes are followed.

Following discussion of the main issues raised the Vice-Chair and members were satisfied that CCEA did not take part in this type of activity.

### **3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 October 2011**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 October 2011 were proposed by Mr John Wilkinson and seconded by Mrs Dorothy Black.

### *Action Points*

The Interim Chief Executive updated members on the following :

*Pay Remit Letter* : approval has been given for outstanding pay remits to be paid to staff up until 31 March 2012.

*Revised Management Statement* : members noted that a revised draft was with DE's Finance Department for final approval.

*Appointment of Chair and New Members* : The DE representative confirmed that further clarification was required before proceeding with the appointments.

The Vice-Chair placed on record her thanks to Council members for continuing to contribute to and support the work of the organisation.

It was agreed that she would seek further clarification at the Accountability Meeting on 10 January 2012.

*CCEA Report* : it was agreed that CCEA's report on the lessons learned and actions taken on the EYECEP would be circulated in advance of the 29 February 2012 Council meeting.

*Regulation* : members were advised that DE and DEL were in the early stages of developing policy. The Vice-Chair agreed to raise this at the Accountability Meeting on 10 January 2012.

## **4 Correspondence**

Members noted the various items of correspondence in relation to :

- *CCEA Mathematics 2 Summer 2011 series* : This issue has been referred to a group of experts and the regulators will carry out an independent review. Members will be updated.
- *CCEA Costed Work Programme* : revision of timescales and current process to secure funding
- *Computer Based Assessment : Award of Contract* : Business Case approved.
- *Provision of Translated Education Resources for Irish Medium Schools* : Business Case approved.
- *UCAS Admissions Process Review* : on agenda for discussion
- Pay Remit Approval
- DE Acting Up Policy
- Use of Public Sector Venues for External Events

## **5 Governance and Accountability**

*GAR Minutes : 8 September 2011*

Members noted the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 September 2011.

Clarification was sought on the Business Case approvals process. The DoES confirmed that significant progress had been made, however, 13 retrospective business cases are outstanding and 9 business cases require completion.

The Vice-Chair said she would raise this at the next Accountability Review meeting. She asked the DoES to provide a list of cases awaiting approval.

*Next GAR Meeting*

The next Governance and Accountability meeting was scheduled for 10 January 2012.

## **6 Finance and Planning**

***Finance Committee Report : 23 November 2011***

In the absence of the Chairman of the Finance Committee, the Interim Chief Executive advised that the minutes of the previous meeting were not finalised.

He assured Council that the committee had fulfilled their scrutiny function on all finances and items requiring approval.

- The October 2011 Finance Reports and Statement of Financial Position were discussed at the meeting. These were included in papers (C/98/1 and 2) for information.
- A total of £2.7M will be returned to DE as a result of efficiencies and additional income.
- The time taken for business case approvals process has reduced.
- The operational risks and challenging timeframes around the delivery of two new computer based assessments have been placed on CCEA's Risk Register.
- Policies : 6 out of 8 policies were discussed and approved; 2 require minor amendments.
- HR : an update on a range of activities was received and no grievances reported. (The Interim Chief Executive welcomed this as there had been an upsurge of grievances throughout the Education sector).

Council was advised that members of the Finance Committee were concerned about the lack of progress on pay remits for staff, particularly those who had not received increments. It was confirmed that this was being progressed with DE and DfP.

***Finance Report as at 31 October 2011***

***C/98/1***

Members were content with the level of scrutiny applied by the Finance Committee and noted the information provided.

**Statement of Financial Position as at 31 October 2011**

**C/98/2**

Members were content with the information provided.

**Summary of January 2012 Monitoring Round**

**C/98/3**

Members were content with the information provided.

The Vice-Chair thanked the Finance Committee for fulfilling their scrutiny function.

**7 Audit**

**Audit and Risk Committee Report : 16 November 2011**

In the absence of the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee, the Director of Corporate Services gave the following report.

- *Conflict of Interests* : members confirmed there were no conflict of interests.
- *Self Assessment Workshop* : took place on 12 January. A Committee member advised that several suggestions were put forward to increase the effectiveness of the committee.
- *Post-project evaluations* : one evaluation is pending.
- *Non-Compliance* : members noted the slight increase in non-compliances for August and September 2011 (mainly due to ICT legacy arrangements). Specific guidance and advice will be provided to the relevant teams.

Members were content that overall CCEA had robust mechanisms in place.

- *Single Tender Actions (STAs)* : DE to provide further guidance on what constitutes a STA.
- *Corporate Risk Register* : no red or critical risks reported.
- *Quarterly Assurance Statement* : the committee noted issues on commercial insurance.
- *Risk Management Framework* : CCEA's framework will be revised to include a 'risk appetite'. A new framework will be produced in January 2012 for future use.
- *Internal Audit Activity* : a progress report on the Internal Audit plan was given.
- *Standards Over Time Reports* : summaries of findings on 4 subjects were provided. An audit and action plan has been drawn up for each and remedial action initiated where required. The committee will be kept up to date on progress.
- *CCEA's readiness for January examinations series* : the committee received a detailed paper outlining examination activities for the January series. The paper was accepted.

Members were assured that issues previously brought before the committee had been addressed.

- *NIAO Update* : NIAO has started to scope the external audit work with PWC.

Members noted the information provided.

## **8 Voluntary Severance Scheme 2011/12**

**C/98/4**

The DoCS advised that the Voluntary Severance Scheme 2011/12 was scrutinised and endorsed by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2011.

He confirmed that 30 expressions of interest had been received and 13 posts had been identified for suppression. These have been accepted by DE. Directors reviewed the remaining posts and no further suppressions were identified for 2012.

A Council member sought confirmation that staff who had not been successful have been spoken to and expectations managed. The DoCS confirmed that regular consultation had taken place and those who have requested individual meetings have met with the relevant Director.

Members sought an assurance that the core business of the organisation would not be affected. It was confirmed that in reviewing the posts, the needs of the organisation had been taken into account.

Members were satisfied with the information and assurances provided.

The Voluntary Severance Business Case for 2011/12 was signed by the Vice-Chairperson.

## **9 Education**

### ***Education Committee***

The Vice-Chair confirmed that the Education Committee scheduled for 30 November 2011 had been cancelled due to the Industrial Action. The next meeting would take place on 8 February 2012.

### ***Computer Based Assessment***

**C/98/5**

The DoES advised that two providers have been identified for statutory computer –based assessments in Literacy and Numeracy from September 2012. Since awarding a significant amount of work has been completed and CCEA is on schedule within a very tight timeframe.

Two options were identified for consideration. Following discussion and clarification members agreed with **Option 2**.

### ***Update on Training for New Assessment Arrangements***

The DoES reported that a significant training programme for primary and post-primary schools was under way, with face to face training; on-line and cluster group (in local areas) training.

### *Impact of Industrial Action*

INTO announced on 12 December 2011 that it has advised its members not to take part in any training for the new assessment arrangements and if already trained they should play no part in implementing these.

The DoES wished to place on record his concerns about the impact this action could have on CCEA's training programmes for the new Computer Based Assessments and Assessment Arrangements for Cross-Curricular Skills. It could also significantly impact on the Shadow Year. The consequence could be that Council will have less feedback on manageability and workload issues and therefore advice to DE would not benefit from comprehensive experiences of the Shadow Year.

He confirmed that should development of the Computer Based Assessment training be impacted, then the delivery of assessment for use from September 2012 could be compromised.

The Interim Chief Executive assured members that the Minister was aware of these issues. He suggested that Council inform DE of its concerns. The Vice-Chair asked the Interim Chief Executive to take this forward with DE officials.

### ***Draft Response to DE Consultation on Proposed Changes at GCSE in Northern Ireland*** ***C/98/6***

The Regulation and Accreditation Manager advised that DE is undertaking a consultation on GCSE reform. This follows the announcement of changes to GCSE qualifications in England.

Members considered the draft response to the consultation and agreed that :

- decisions on assessment arrangements (unitised or linear) should be made in the best interests of learners (to allow them to fulfil their potential) and should be best left to teachers.
- assessments within GCSEs need to be valid and 'fit for purpose', taking into consideration the nature and scope of each subject;
- there should not be a 'one for all' rule for linear or unitised GCSEs;
- a robust evaluation of the current (unitised) system is required before changes to the specifications are made;
- the proposals on spelling, punctuation and grammar should be implemented within mark schemes for English Literature, Geography, History and Religious Studies.

Members agreed that comparability across the UK needed to be maintained and suggested that CCEA monitor developments in England and report back on any impact these developments may have on GCSE qualifications in Northern Ireland.

## **UCAS Admissions Process Review**

**C/98/7**

The Regulation and Accreditation Manager referred to paper **C/98/7** and sought members' views.

Members discussed in detail the proposals and could not support them in their current form. They suggested that CCEA engage with UCAS to address the logistical problems and seek a way forward that would benefit all.

Council strongly supported the proposals for enhancing the current system and suggested they be implemented as soon as possible.

The Vice-Chair asked that these comments be included in Council's response on the proposals.

### **10 Any Other Business**

None identified.

### **11 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 29 February 2012 at 10.00 am in CCEA.

The Vice-Chair thanked members and officers for their contributions to the meeting and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

