

Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

COUNCIL

Minutes of the ninety-second meeting of Council held on Thursday 16 December 2010 at 10.30 hours in Room 115, CCEA, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present : Mr D McKee (Chairman) Mr D Thompson
 Mr J Clarke Mrs D Black
 Mrs H McClenaghan Mr J Wilkinson

Mr G Boyd (Interim Chief Executive)
Mr R Hanna (Director, Education Strategy)
Mr M Quinn (Director, Corporate Services)
Ms AM Duffy (Director, Qualifications)
Mr R McCune (Accreditation & Regulation Manager) Item 7 only

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Ms M Crilly; Mr J Collins and Ms P O'Farrell.

2 **Chairman's Business**

None.

3 **Minutes of previous meeting held on 20 October 2010**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 October 2010 were proposed by Mr J Wilkinson and seconded by Mrs D Black as a true and accurate record.

A copy was signed by the Chairman.

Action points

English Examination Issue

The Director of Qualifications (DoQ) advised that the investigation had been completed.

Information has been redacted under s. 40 (Personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as disclosure would breach the right of individual(s) under Principle 1 (Fair processing) of the Data Protection Act 1998.

An update would be provided at the next Council meeting.

4 Correspondence

Supplementary 2010/11 Pay Guidance

Members noted the information provided in the letter from DE to Chief Executives of all NDPBs regarding the application of a 2 year pay freeze for the public sector.

5 Governance and Accountability

Minutes of Accountability Review Meeting 5 October 2010

C/92/1

The Interim Chief Executive drew members' attention to the minutes of the last Accountability Review Meeting. The main issues discussed were:

- Budgets
- Internal Audits
- Pay Remits and approval arrangements
- Assessment Implementation
- Entitlement Framework
- Irish Medium, in particular :-
 - The all-island catalogue of resources for Irish-medium education is updated regularly on line by CCEA once the hard copy version is published.
 - Colleagues in the South remain very positive about engagement with CCEA, in particular the pace and quality of resource production.
- Examinations Delivery

He advised that this was the first occasion that his full TMT was present and confirmed that this had added value to discussions.

Members welcomed the clarity provided in the minutes.

6 Finance

- ***Finance Committee Report : 16 November 2010***

Members noted the detail of the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2010.

In the absence of the Chairman of the Finance Committee, the Interim Chief Executive reported on the meeting.

Projects : members noted that the project budget would not be spent. A net easement of £500K was reported to DE.

The DE Observer sought clarification on the use of efficiency savings within projects. It was confirmed that an aggressive approach had been taken towards running meetings off-site and savings had been generated.

Training

A Council member sought an assurance that the quality of training would be maintained. It was confirmed that this was the case. Teachers' centres and other Board premises were now being used.

The Chairman asked about alternative methods of training. The DoES advised that on-line training was being used, however face to face engagement would continue. He confirmed that all resources and support materials were available on-line.

Voluntary Severance

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) reported that £25M had been made available across the Education Sector for management and administration reductions. CCEA staff has been asked to submit expressions of interest by 20 December 2010.

A proposal and business case would be submitted to ESAIT and DE for consideration. If successful this would come into effect from 31 March 2011.

Procurement

A Council member asked about progress on procurement issues. The Interim Chief Executive said that CCEA continued to work through various options with DE and has further developed the relationship with the BELB CoPE. However, there were specific procurements which may require single tender action. These were also being progressed.

It was confirmed that DE have been formally informed about the single tender actions on courier services and script scanning and marking.

Management Statement 2008

The Interim Chief Executive advised that the officials had failed to act on changes to the Management Statement in 2008. In particular, pre-approvals required from DE regarding any payments over £30,000.

Although this requirement is now been applied, concern has been expressed to DE and DFP that the limit of £30K is unworkable for an organisation with a £30M budget.

It was suggested that this could be re-negotiated. However the limit would be adhered to pending further discussion.

Costed Work Programme

The DE Observer reported that to allow for greater streamlining and alignment of priorities of costed work plans across the Education sector to DE priorities the deadline of 30 November 2010 had been set aside. CCEA should continue to plan and manage its resources for 2011/12 until further instructions are received.

7 Education

Education Committee Report : 30 November 2010

Members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2010.

The Chairperson reported the Committee had dealt with a significant amount of business at its first meeting, some of which had come forward for discussion at this Council meeting.

She commended the officers for the standard of the papers presented.

Membership

External membership of the committee had yet to be finalised. This would be discussed with the Chairman and Interim Chief Executive with a view to bringing a breadth of expertise to the committee.

‘General’ and ‘Applied’ Qualifications within the Entitlement Framework

C/92/2

The Chairman welcomed Mr Roger McCune, Regulation and Accreditation Manager to the meeting.

Members were advised that DE had asked CCEA to review the definitions of ‘General’ and ‘Applied’ qualifications in order that the Entitlement Framework can fully meet the needs of young people and schools.

Advice was discussed and accepted by the Education Committee at its meeting on 30 November. The Council paper, if accepted would form the advice to go forward to DE.

Following discussion, the Chairman advised that members were content with the paper.

It was confirmed that CCEA would work closely with DE to take this forward.

Policy Developments in England

A copy of the White Paper : ‘The Importance of Teaching’, was circulated in advance. Members noted that the main issue for CCEA was the linear type of assessment proposed. However, no immediate decisions have been taken.

The Interim Chief Executive said CCEA would keep a watching brief and monitor developments relevant to Northern Ireland.

8 Any Other Business

Outstanding Pay Issues

The Interim Chief Executive advised that he had had a series of meetings with the Audit Office and DE to progress the issue. Following discussions it was found that the irregularity had arisen at the point of notification and therefore it has been agreed that the payments could be made. The affected staff would be paid in the December pay run.

The Interim Chief Executive has written formally to DE setting out the actions together with supporting statements. The Audit Office will also be informed.

TMT is the only group outstanding and business cases have been submitted to DfP. It was hoped that this would also be resolved shortly.

The Chairman and Council welcomed this resolution.

Information has been redacted under s. 40 (Personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as disclosure would breach the right of individual(s) under Principle 1 (Fair processing) of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Budget

The Interim Chief Executive advised that the draft budget settlement announced for education was very disappointing. The reduction on CCEA's total budget could be an additional £1M.

Members noted that 2011/12 would be particularly challenging if this reduction came into effect.

9 Date of next meeting

The next meeting was confirmed for Thursday 24 February 2011 at 13.30 hours.

The Chairman thanked members for their contributions and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.