

## **COUNCIL**

Minutes of the one hundred and twentieth meeting of Council held on Wednesday 16 March 2016 at 2.15 pm in Room 115, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, CCEA HQ, 29 Clarendon Road, Belfast, BT1 3BG.

**Present:**

Mr T Carson (Chair)	Mr J Wilkinson
Ms M Crilly	Mr M Donnelly
Mrs C Harpur	Mrs R Cowan
Dr L Caul	Dr A Kerr
Mr T Armstrong	

Mr J Edwards (Chief Executive)  
Ms AM Duffy (Director of Qualifications)  
Mr R Hanna (Director of Education Strategy)  
Mr J Daly (Financial Services Manager)  
Mr R McCune (Regulation & Accreditation Manager)

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

### **Introduction**

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting. He confirmed that a closed session of Council had taken prior to the main meeting in relation to Council Effectiveness.

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr R Thompson, Mrs J Mussen, Dr N Morton, Mrs K O'Hare, Dr P Cunningham and Mrs S McClelland.

### **2 Declaration of Interests**

Members confirmed there were no conflicts of interests for any of the agenda items.

### **3 Chair's Business**

#### *Tabled Papers*

The Chair drew attention to the various papers tabled for members' information.

#### *Celebrating with CCEA*

The Chair confirmed that the Celebrating Achievement Event would be held on 7 April 2016 in the Titanic Exhibition Centre. Invitations would be issued to Council in due course.

#### *Rotation of Committee Chairs*

The Chair advised that, in line with best practice, and expressions of interest received from members, new committee chairs had been appointed as follows :

- Neill Morton : Education Committee

- Martin Donnelly : Audit & Risk Assurance Committee
- Rosemary Cowan : Finance & Resources Committee

The Chair of Council would remain as Chair of Remuneration Committee.

He wished to place on record his thanks to Jennifer Mussen and John Wilkinson for their support and significant contributions to the work of their committees; and also for providing succinct reports to Council throughout their time as Chairs of Education and Audit & Risk Assurance committees respectively.

#### *Extension of Terms of Office*

The Chair confirmed that terms of office on Council for Ms Michele Crilly and Mr John Wilkinson had been extended to 30 September 2016.

#### **Chair's Report**

The Chair reported on a range of activities since the last meeting. These included :

- GAR Meeting held on 1 March 2016
- Meeting with Sharon O'Connor, Chair of Education Authority
- Meeting with Carl Savage (DE) regarding recruitment of new Council members
- Meeting with ASM regarding Corporate Governance audit
- Induction Session for the Regulatory Advisory Committee Members (including meeting with CEO Qualifications Wales)
- Meeting with Director of CIPFA (NI) on Council Effectiveness and Chairing of Meeting Skills
- Ongoing discussions regarding Professional Technical Qualifications, with DEL and the Chief Executive.

He also attended the BBC Event on Microbit.

#### *Development Day 24 February 2016*

The Chair confirmed that follow up actions from the Development Day held on 24 February were being taken on board and a draft training programme drawn up from January to June 2016.

He confirmed that the 1-1 meetings with the Chief Executive reflected progress against the work plan and risk register and included updates on matters relating to:

- Finance and budget
- HR (including VES and Organisational restructure)
- Communications across the organisation

He confirmed that future reports would be of a high level overview.

#### **Chief Executive's Report**

The Chief Executive drew attention to the bullet point brief previously circulated and provided a brief overview of the main matters in relation to :

### *Education Strategy*

- CBA : over 40,250 pupil assessments were completed across 233 schools with no significant concerns reported. Overall feedback from teachers was positive.
- CBA Futures : DE has commissioned CCEA to conduct a research and scoping exercise to outline how best/if CCEA and partner(s) can develop an in-house adaptive computer-based assessment to meet current legislation. Findings will be presented to DE at the end of March 2016.

### *Qualifications*

- Review of Specifications : programme is progressing on target, with 20 out of 22 GCE specifications accredited. The first 10 specifications have been despatched to schools. The GCSE revision will begin in April 2016.
- Communications : A range of social media activity continues, with the ReVision web-site remaining very popular with good engagement from teachers.
- January 2016 and March 2016 Examination Series : Both examinations series were closed out without any issues of concern reported. Results for the March series will issue on 14 April.
- Qualifications Technology Roadmap : 14 of the 17 projects are on target and within budget, however the A2C Project has been put on hold due to the technology provider being unable to provide the service CCEA requires.

### *Regulation*

- Revision of Specifications: the accreditation programme for GCSE specifications is currently on target.
- CCEA will commence regulatory responsibility for Professional and Technical Qualifications from April 2016.

Clarification was sought on whether Council had taken the decision to take on this new responsibility. The Chair confirmed that commissioning letters would have come forward from DE and DEL asking CCEA to take forward work in this area. The establishment of the Regulatory Advisory Committee would now provide advice to Council on all strategic matters relating to Regulation.

### *Corporate*

- Investors in People : CCEA has achieved the Silver Award.

Members were content with the information received.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his report.

## *FOI Requests*

Members noted the most recent FOI requests.

## **4 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 December 2015**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 December 2015 were proposed by Ms Michele Crilly and seconded by Mr John Wilkinson as a true and accurate record. A copy was signed by the Chair.

## *Action Points*

Members noted the status of the action points. He advised that a rolling programme for development of Council members will be put in place.

## **5 Correspondence**

Members noted the following correspondence:

- NI Year of Food and Drink 2016
- Correspondence regarding 'Teachers Employed as Examiners and Moderators'
- Changes to the Regulation of Vocational Qualifications in Northern Ireland
- Notification of CCEA's Regulation responsibility for Professional and Technical Qualifications from 1 April 2016
- Small-Entry Subjects

### *'Teachers Employed as Examiners and Moderators'*

The Chief Executive drew attention to the correspondence from the Teachers Negotiating Committee (TNC), management side, and advised that CCEA had not been consulted on this matter prior to the letter being issued. He confirmed he had written to DE expressing serious concerns regarding the risks associated to the running of the summer examinations series. Subsequently TNC issued a further letter alleviating some of these concerns. This correspondence has been welcomed.

The Chair concurred with the Chief Executive and confirmed that a meeting had been held with the Permanent Secretary and senior DE officials to highlight the potential damage this could have caused if a response had not been received to CCEA's concerns.

He commended the Chief Executive on the swift actions taken to date which have helped address the issues as far as possible.

Members commended the actions taken and the vigilance of the CCEA officers on this matter. An assurance was sought and received that the risk has been placed on the Corporate Risk Register and would be reported on at the next Audit & Risk Assurance Committee.

### *Small-Entry Subjects*

The Chief Executive advised that sufficient funding had been allocated to address the issues in the above correspondence. He confirmed that the allocation was adequate and he had met with the Welsh Board who is willing to work collaboratively on this. Pearson has also indicated they are willing to remain in Northern Ireland, but wished to enter discussions on the matter.

Clarification was sought on whether the existing qualification portfolio meet the current and future economic and student needs in light of the new changes. The Chair advised that with regard to the Fundamental Review of Qualifications, the (Minister's) Expert Group will provide their advice on future qualifications and how they should be assessed. Once considered by the Minister, it was possible that CCEA would be commissioned to take work forward.

### *Budget Allocation 2016/17*

The Chief Executive confirmed that CCEA's budget allocation was received on 15 March 2016. He advised of a cost pressure of £450K and that ear marked funding for Irish Medium and Revision of Specifications had been removed. Proposals would be worked through and presented to the Finance Committee and Council for consideration and approval.

The Chair wished to place on record that the reduction in allocation would continue to create pressure and place demands on staff in the organisation to continue to deliver quality outcomes for learners and fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

The Chair confirmed that additional meetings of Finance Committee and Council would be convened as soon as possible as a response had to be submitted to DE by 22 April 2016.

## **6 Governance and Accountability**

### *Governance and Accountability Review (GAR) Meeting : 1 March 2016*

The Chair drew attention to the agenda for the GAR meeting which took place on 1 March 2016 and provided an overview of the matters discussed. He confirmed there were no concerns raised and welcomed the degree of confidence expressed by the Permanent Secretary.

### *Governance and Accountability Arrangements for the Oversight of Arms-Length Bodies*

Members noted the documentation previously circulated for information and reference.

## **7 Audit**

### *Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report : 20 January 2016*

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee referred to the detail provided in the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2016. He assured members that the committee had discharged their scrutiny and challenge function on all matters and reported on the following:

- Risk Assurance in Awards and Purchases September to December 2015 : there were no unauthorised purchases and a significant reduction in direct awards during this reporting period.

Members recognised this as an excellent performance.

- Fraud Report : an update was provided. Members were content that all appropriate actions have been taken.
- Annual Report and Accounts : members noted the timescales for production and approval for 2015/16.
- Corporate Risk Register : December 2015 : members were content with the information provided.

Members noted that the CRR would be presented to Council for approval bi-annually.

- Internal Audit : ASM presented 3 reports for consideration. Members were content with the ratings allocated.
- Audit Strategy 2015/16 : was presented and agreed by the committee.
- Investigation into Missing Scripts : Members were content with the actions taken and recommendations for completion of the matter.

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee wished to place on record his thanks to members and officers for their guidance and support during his term on the committee and wished Mr Martin Donnelly well as future Chair.

Members noted the information provided

## **8 Regulation**

*Regulatory Advisory Committee : 13 January 2016*

The Chair advised that the Regulatory Advisory Committee had been formed and drew attention to the minutes of the induction session held on 13 January 2016. He confirmed that additional members had been co-opted together with representatives from Wales, Ireland and Scotland. He asked that the Terms of Reference of the Committee be circulated to Council members for information.

Clarification was sought on how the work of the committee would be reported to Council. The Chair advised that this was under consideration and would be confirmed at the next meeting.

Members welcomed this development

The Chief Executive introduced this item.

The Accreditation and Regulation Manager updated members on the preliminary stages of preparation for the regulation of Professional and Technical Qualifications which would be CCEA's responsibility from 1 April 2016. He drew attention to the information provided in paper C/120/1 and provided an overview on the matters being progressed. Clarification was sought on :

- how the perception of 'Conflict of Interests' was being managed;

It was confirmed that this continued to be managed effectively and robustly by the Chief Executive. The Chair assured members that CCEA would continue to demonstrate independence as both a Regulator and an Awarding Organisation.

- whether sufficient funds had been allocated for the additional responsibility.

It was confirmed that funding was received through a letter of offer from the Department for Employment and Learning, this would reflect the staffing allocation.

Members were content with the information provided.

## **9 Revision of Specifications : Project Update**

**C/120/2**

The Chief Executive introduced this item and advised that the GCE revision was nearing completion. The project is made up of 3 independent streams, Awarding, Accreditation and Communication and Stakeholder Engagement all reporting into the Chief Executive.

### *Accreditation*

The Regulation & Accreditation Manager confirmed that 20 out of 22 GCE specifications had been accredited with 2 awaiting final decisions. He reported that the process had been conducted successfully and commended the Awarding Organisation for the way in which they had dealt with matters raised by the Accreditation team and for their professionalism throughout the GCSE ReVision.

He outlined the timelines for the development of the GCSE specifications.

A Council member asked for further information on the accreditation process. It was agreed that the Regulation & Accreditation Manager would accommodate this request outside of the meeting.

### *Qualifications Development*

The Director of Qualifications (DoQ) drew attention to the information provided and advised that the project was on target and within budget. The first 10 specifications had been issued to schools and the remaining 12 scheduled for despatch. She updated members on the launch events for teachers and advised that the full range of support resources would be available to schools in e-format in advance of 1 September 2016.

Members sought clarification on a range of matters and were satisfied with the explanations provided.

## 10 Education

### ***Education Committee Report : 3 February 2016***

In the absence of the Chair of the Education Committee, the Chief Executive drew attention to the minutes provided and reported on the main issues discussed. These included:

- Minister's statement regarding GCSE Grading.
- A presentation on GCE Life and Health Sciences : a new qualification which has been developed in response to the needs of the economy.
- SEN Qualifications Provision
- Revision of specification
- Computer Based Assessments (CBA) Autumn 2015

Members were content with the information provided and welcomed the fact that no significant issues had been reported on the CBA Autumn 2015 assessments.

### ***Computer Based Assessment : Futures Project : Progress and Analysis*** ***C/120/3***

The Chief Executive introduced this item. He reminded members that this project has been undertaken following a recommendation from Council that CCEA should explore its own 'in house' solution.

The Director of Education Strategy (DoES) confirmed that this was a Department of Education project and highlighted the governance arrangements around the project.

He reported that, to date, findings are that should sufficient funding be allocated, significant testing time built in and the provision of expertise in psychometrics and specialist knowledge in adaptive assessment, it would be possible for CCEA to develop an in-house assessment which would be owned by the Northern Ireland system for Computer Adaptive Assessment.

Should CCEA be commissioned to take forward this work, it would be preferable to conduct a pilot in 2020.

He advised that the report would be submitted to DE by 31 March 2016 and confirmed that a draft would be issued to Council in advance for comment. The report does not require Council approval.

The Chair wished to place on record his thanks to the DoES and his team for the substantial amount of work undertaken to date.

Members sought clarification on a number of matters and were content with the explanations provided.



***Draft Consultation Response : Consultation on New Statutory Guidance to support the General Conditions of Recognition*** ***C/120/4***

The Chief Executive introduced this item and advised that the consultation was for organisations operating under OfQual. He reminded members that CCEA had decided to withdraw its qualifications from England, however legacy qualifications were still in operation.

He advised that the findings from the consultation could present challenges in the regulatory environment which would be discussed by the Regulatory Advisory Committee and Council.

Members formally approved the response as final.

## **11 Finance, Planning and Performance**

### *Finance Committee Report : 2 March 2016*

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that members had fulfilled their scrutiny and challenge function on all finance matters. He drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided and reported on the following :

- Financial position at end of January 2016 : underspend of £499K (2.8%) outside of the work programme target of 1%. This will be monitored closely with contingencies being enacted as necessary as year-end approaches.
- Corporate Plan : Monitoring Report : on the agenda for this meeting. Members were content with the information provided and approach taken.

### *Procurement and Business Case Update*

- One live procurement with the Education CoPE : Capital Purchase of High Volume Photocopies : this has now been finalised.
- Two procurements have been awarded by CPD : KS3 Irish Textbooks : Researchers; and Revision of Specifications Printing, Collation & Dispatch of GCSE revised specification materials.
- 86 business cases were approved between November 2015 and January 2016, representing a significant amount of work.

One Addendum to Revised Insurance Requirements Business Case was approved by the Committee.

### *HR Report*

- Silver Status Awarded from Investors in People
- Draft People Strategy : was considered by the Committee and is on the agenda for this meeting.

## *Qualifications*

Members were advised that the Awarding to Centres (A2C) Project within the Qualifications Technology Roadmap Programme had been put on hold due to the technology provider being unable to fulfil the service CCEA requires.

Members noted the information provided and commended the organisation on the Investors in People Silver Award.

### ***Finance Report as at 31 January 2016***

***C/120/5***

The Financial Services Manager reported an underspend of £499K (2.8%) at this time. This was outside the DE work programme target of 1%. He assured members that plans were in place to utilise the budget and drew attention to the main areas of underspend summarised in paper ***C/120/5***.

In relation to the February 2016 finance report he advised of an underspend of £313K (1.5%) - a significant improvement towards the 1% target. He confirmed that a number of contingency plans had been enacted with a view to minimising the underspend further and being within budget at year end.

### ***Statement of Financial Position as at 31 January 2016***

***C/120/6***

Members noted the information provided. The FM confirmed there were no issues of concern to note.

### ***2016/17 Budget Update***

Members noted that this had been covered in the Chief Executive's report under Chair's Business.

### ***Management Statement/Financial Memorandum***

***C/120/7***

Members noted the documentation provided.

### ***Corporate Plan : Monitoring Report***

***C/120/8***

The Chief Executive drew attention to paper ***C/120/8*** and advised that the majority of measures were on track for achievement. Of the 4 not achieved 3 relate to an Examinations matter and 1 RIDDOR incident.

Clarification was sought on the postponement of the staff survey. It was confirmed that this was a recommendation from the Finance Committee and also benchmarking was being carried out with a view to ensuring an appropriate variety of items are included in the survey. An update would be provided to Council at the June meeting.

Members were content with the information provided.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the draft strategy had been considered and recommended to Council by the Finance Committee. He advised that suggestions had been taken on board and that the document was intended to be a 5 year strategy which would evolve as actions are monitored and closed out.

An assurance was sought and received that the outcomes were measurable and realistic.

Members commended and formally ratified the document.

## **12 Any Other Business**

### *Purdah*

The Chief Executive confirmed that Purdah was now in operation. Purdah did apply to CCEA as an arms-length body of Department of Education and, as such, the rules of Purdah extended to Council.

### *Additional Meetings of Finance Committee and Council*

The Chair advised that availability from members would be sought for additional meetings on 6 April to consider and approve the Draft Budget for 2016/17.

## **13 Date of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of Council was confirmed as Wednesday 29 June 2016 at 10.00 am.

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

