

Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Council

Minutes of the fiftieth meeting of Council, held on Wednesday 17 December 2003 at 1000 hours in Room 111, 1st Floor, CCEA, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present:

Dr A Lennon (Chairman)	Mr B Carlin
Dr A Murray	Mrs P O'Farrell
Mr J Clarke	Mr B Turtle
Mr J Collins	Ms J Bell
Mr J Lee	Mrs D Black
Mr D Thompson	Mr D McKee
Mrs M Watson	Mr J Ellison
Dr W Mulryne	

Mr D Woods, Assessor, Department of Education
Mrs M Cree, Assessor, Department for Employment and Learning

Mr G Boyd, Chief Executive
Dr A Walker, Head of Education Services
Mr D Mulholland, Head of Corporate Services

Ms C Gallagher
Mrs H Thompson Item 5 only

Miss N Kennedy, Manager CE Office

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs C Bell; Mrs H McClenaghan, Professor P Roebuck and Mr D McCall.

2 Chairman's business

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, in particular, Mrs Marion Cree, deputising for Mrs Catherine Bell from DEL. He also welcomed Ms Carmel Gallagher and Ms Helen Thompson.

- Council Security Passes: arrangements were made for those members wishing to have their photographs taken for permanent passes after today's meeting. Christmas lunch will then be served in Room 111 for those members wishing to stay.
- Top Candidate Awards would take place on Monday 22 December – members were reminded to support this event.
- EFQM Assessor visit took place on 19 and 20 November. Chairman, several Council members and a cross section of staff took part in extensive interviews with the assessors. The Chairman thanked Mrs Mae Watson, Mrs Patricia O'Farrell and Mr John Ellison for taking part in this exercise. The results of the audit will be available early in the New Year.

The Chairman drew members' attention to letters to the Minister about the Curriculum & Assessment advice, explained that the main business of the meeting was to ensure that all issues surrounding Key Stage 3 and the other Key Stages 1,2, 4 were fully debated, at the workshop on 3 December and if so agree the advice to go to the Minister on 31 December 2003.

Mrs Watson and Mr Turtle reported on a recent visit of Further Education institutions and the Inspectorate to China. Meetings had taken place with the British Council who were keen to work with quality organisations, such as CCEA, to administer and accredit examinations in China.

Dr Mulryne informed members that a delegation from Beijing had visited Belfast in November and suggested there was a need for joined up initiatives going forward to include Northern Ireland.

It was agreed that Mrs Watson and Mr Turtle would meet with the Chief Executive to discuss raising CCEA's profile in terms of offering qualifications and examinations in China.

The Chairman reported he has had a series of interviews with education partners around the province regarding offering education services outside Northern Ireland. A report has been sent to Gordon Topping which could be made available for strategic thinking in this area.

Future Council Meetings

The Chairman drew members' attention to meetings scheduled for 2004, ie:

Wednesday 21 January 2004	Wednesday 3 March 2004
Wednesday 21 April 2004	Wednesday 9 June 2004

As the Council would be dealing with substantial issues over the next period of time it was proposed that some of the dates for Council meetings would be set aside for workshops using the same format as that for the Key Stage 3 workshop which took place on 3 December 2003, to discuss and debate issues fully in order to give a steer to the appropriate sub-committee going forward.

With members agreement the following programme was drawn up :

Wednesday 21 January 2004 :	Workshop to discuss 14-19 Developments
Wednesday 3 March 2004 :	Business Meeting
Wednesday 21 April 2004 :	Workshop
Wednesday 9 June 2004 :	Business Meeting

The Chairman informed members that planning for the next 3-year corporate plan had begun and that Business Committee and Council would have an input into the process. It was agreed that Miss Kennedy would seek a suitable date for this workshop and circulate all relevant details to members in advance.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 October 2003

With the addition of Dr W Mulryne and Mr D McKee to those present, the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2003, were approved by the Council and a copy signed by the Chairman.

Action points

The Chief Executive reported that the majority of the action points had been dealt with and updated members on :

- Risk framework/register – currently being reviewed to decrease the number of risks. This would be presented to the next Audit Committee and then go forward to Business Committee before coming to Council for final consideration.
- Pupil Profile and ALTA - are now the responsibility of the E-Learning & Services Committee. Concern has been expressed regarding the future relationship with ALTA once the ISB funding comes to an end.
- SCORE concert – was very successful and thanked those Council members who attended the event for their support.

4 Committees

E-Learning & Services Committee

Mr Ellison reported that :

- Members visited CCEA Multimedia. Very impressive. Recommended that all Council members visit this department. The Chief Executive agreed that the organisation would be opened up to Council and a series of visits to different departments would be arranged for 2004;
- An e-Learning Manager has now been appointed. Richard Hanna was successful and took up appointment on 5 December 2003.
- Clarification on the relationships between CCEA and other organisations has been sought to ensure CCEA has the appropriate influence going forward.
- An e-Learning strategy would be put together for full consultation and discussion with Senior Managers before being presented to Council for consideration.

Mr Ellison also invited other members of Council to contribute to this committee going forward. Dr Murray agreed to join if time permitted.

Regulation and Qualifications Committee

Mr Ellison, as acting chair, reported that the meeting held on 12 November 2003, focussed on Key Skills and drew members' attention to the letter to the Minister on Key Skills. Dr Walker advised that no feedback had been received from the Department to date.

Business Committee

The Chairman reported on :

- Finance report was discussed in detail to ensure robustness. He congratulated Mr Mulholland on the presentation and clarity of the information provided.
- Corporate Planning – 3 year planning process was discussed and it was agreed to invite council members to be involved at the beginning of this process.
- Restructuring of Corporate Services – now completed and all difficult issues have been handled particularly well.
- Accommodation – proposals to procure additional accommodation at the William Ritchie building were tabled and discussed by Mr Mulholland. This has been signed off in the short term, however, long term solutions will still be sought.

Policy Development : Project Management

C/50/1

The Chief Executive said that part of Council's role is to drive and develop policy in all areas of CCEA's business under project management. He drew attention to the initial project inventory which gives an indication of the range of projects ongoing. To allow us to do this a project management scheme will be put into place.

A project board will be set up consisting of 3 people:

- a member of TMT;
- a council member, ie. the relevant chair of the sub-committee; and
- a project manager, ie. senior officer who will be responsible for the work going forward.

A register on all projects across the organisation will be set up, maintained and monitored carefully under the direction of the Chief Executive. Regular reports will be given to Business Committee and Council to ensure that set deadlines are met and the projects are achieved within the agreed budget.

A progress report will be provided at a future meeting.

5 Curriculum & Assessment

Key Stage 3 consultation report

C/50/2

The chairman informed members that since the workshop on 3 December, more information had become available and invited Dr Walker to outline the background to the consultation before asking Mrs Thompson to present the latest findings.

Dr Walker outlined the background to the consultation. He commended all staff involved in the consultation and thanked members of the research and statistics team for handling the enormous amount of responses within the short timeframe allowed. He informed members that for the first time CCEA has sought external validation of the consultation process by asking the Consultation Institute, Orpington, Kent, to carry out a scrutiny and if satisfied to issue us with a verification certificate. (letter attached).

Mrs Thompson outlined the consultation process and highlighted the key findings as per attached summary report, which has now been put in the public domain.

The Chairman asked if the submissions from the stakeholders could be made available

Dr Murray wished to place on record that schools welcomed the exceptional closure day to enable the responses to be made on time.

After discussion members accepted the quality of the work carried out during consultation, and were happy with the information provided.

Advice to the Minister on Curriculum & Assessment at Key Stage 3 ***C/50/3***

Dr Walker outlined :

- the brief summary of the issues and proposed action in relation to each (3a);
- the Council's advice in response to the Key Stage 3 consultation (3b); and
- the response to issues raised in the Minister's letter of 5 July on Curriculum and Assessment (3c).

Ms Gallagher assured members that all of the issues raised have been discussed thoroughly through various focus groups.

Dr Walker asked members to consider the information provided and approve paper 3b as the basis for CCEA's final advice on Key Stage 3 to go to the Minister.

The Chief Executive said that in principle the advice to the Minister will go into the public domain. Members stressed the importance of this.

Mr Clarke also asked if the summary paper could be phrased more positively.

The Chairman asked that the Chief Executive, Dr Walker and his team go through the issues highlighted and discussed by members to ensure they have been dealt with in detail.

Subject to this Council agreed the advice to the Minister.

Key Stage 1&2 and Foundation Stage : response to Minister ***C/50/4***

Dr Walker reported that the paper drew together responses to the issues raised by the Minister in her letter of 19 August, and additional issues emerging from the review, in particular :

- clarifying the place of Physical Education (PE) – it is being suggested that a consistent approach be adopted through the key stages, however concerns were expressed about healthy exercise;
- the layout of the World Around Us – it is being suggested that the detail be set out in separate subject strands to ensure clarity; and
- a strategic approach to the introduction of modern language teaching in the primary school – strategic advice sets out clearly that this should be seen within the context of the broad changes going forward and that this be introduced over a substantial period of time.

Dr Mulryne said this has been well debated by the Curriculum and Assessment committee and that he was very content with this way forward.

Dr Murray raised the issue of the whole area of ICT and how it will be used in assessment.

Dr Walker assured members that we will emphasise in the response that there is still a lot of work to be done and draw attention to the particular areas of concern.

Members agreed the response.

Key Stage 4 response to Minister

C/50/5

Dr Walker said this paper sets out responses to the requests contained in the Ministers letter of 5 July 2003 to the proposals for Key Stage 4. The main areas of concern addressed were :

- breadth and balance;
- how all pupils at age 16 have access to a range of appropriate courses in English and maths;
- expert career guidance; and
- inclusion of special educational needs.

The Chairman asked that language of 'key skills' and 'vocational' be addressed going forward.

Members agreed the response.

Costed Plan for Implementation

C/50/6

In response to the Minister's request for CCEA to provide a costed programme for implementation of the curriculum change, Dr Walker presented the costed plans and associated papers to Council for approval.

Mrs Watson sought assurances that teacher education be fully involved in the awareness raising programme.

Mrs Black sought assurance that the continuation of professional development of teachers in higher education be involved also.

Dr Walker agreed to take both points on board.

Mr Clarke congratulated Dr Walker and the group on the achievements to date.

Dr Walker paid tribute to his colleagues in the Boards, in particular Sean McIlhatton and Paddy Mackey who contributed an enormous amount of work in drawing all of this together.

Members approved the plans.

7 Finance position as at 30 November 2003

C/50/7

Mr Mulholland reported that the financial position at end of November was a slight underspend against the budget with a variance of £22,000. This reflects all the costs incurred to date including the impact of restructuring and redundancies.

The recurrent baseline figure has been increased to £11882k; project funding £2378k and a capital baseline figure of £268k.

The Department of Education (DE) confirmed funding for the following:

- £150k of capital funding for a complete upgrade of Finance and HR systems;
- £20k to part fund an Irish Languages officer (along with Foras Na Gaeilge);
- £250k for the development of the Pupil Profile; and
- £80k for the development of VGCSEs.

They have also been notified of the impact upon CCEA of the formation of the National Assessment Agency (NAA) and C2K investment in England.

6 TMT Update

The Chief Executive reported :

- Corporate Planning Process - began by consulting with large groups of staff across the organisation on the corporate plan. Senior Management have been consulted and it is intended to involve business committee and council at the earliest opportunity.
- Corporate Services – restructuring has now been completed with all processes managed carefully and openly with staff concerned and NIPSA. Most of the posts have been filled and a number of people left the organisation on 30 November 2003.
- ISO Audit took place on 15 and 16 December. We have been reaccredited with no non-compliances.
- True Colours Art Exhibition will take place in the Waterfront Hall in January 2004 to coincide with the opening of the North of England Conference.
- CCEA will celebrate its 10th Birthday in 2004. We will be planning a series of suitable celebratory events to mark this occasion and members will be kept fully informed.

8 Any other business

The Chairman:

- reminded members that the Council meeting on 21 January 2004 would be specifically devoted to the whole area of 14-19 developments. Members will receive a programme together with details of venue in due course;
- thanked Mrs Thompson for her input, and for all of the work in preparing the consultation report; and
- wished members a Happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

9 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 21 January 2004 – workshop for 14-19 developments
Wednesday 3 March 2004 – business meeting

Chairman

Date