

Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment

COUNCIL

Minutes of the eightieth meeting of Council held on Wednesday 17 June 2009 at 10.00 hours in the Castle Upton Suite, Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick.

Present :

Mr D McKee	Mr J Wilkinson
Mrs H McClenaghan	Ms K Watson
Mr M Bowen	Mr J Collins
Mr D Thompson	Dr M Brown
Ms M Crilly	Mrs D Black
Mrs P O'Farrell	Mr J Clarke
Ms C McKinney	

Mrs K Godfrey (DE) Item 4 only

Mr N Anderson (Acting Chief Executive)
Mr R Hanna (Director of Education Strategy)
Ms AM Duffy (Director of Qualifications)
Mr M Quinn (Director of Corporate Services)
Mr M Fegan (Chief Finance Officer)

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and advised that Mrs Katrina Godfrey would be attending for the 14-19 discussion and that this would be the main item on the agenda.

1 Apologies

No apologies were received.

2 Chairman's business

Proposal for Quorums and Minutes of Council and Sub-Committees C/80/1

Quorums

Members approved the proposal for determining an appropriate quorum in the event that 1/3 of members are not present.

ESA Update

C/80/2

The Chairman informed members that this paper was for information and regular updates would be provided in this format at future Council meetings.

2nd Tier Posts

It was agreed that in the event of Directors being successful at 2nd tier they would be released at the earliest possible date.

Minutes of Chairs Meeting

Members noted the information provided in the minutes.

End of Council Report

The Acting Chief Executive drew members' attention to the minutes of the Chairs meeting (28 May) regarding the end of committee reports. He advised that these reports would be drafted by the Chair and Senior Officer for each committee and drawn together into one final Council report.

The Chairman confirmed that a Council residential would be held on 26/27 November. The Council meeting will consider the final report at this time.

A small in-house event would be held for all committee members in recognition of their contribution and commitment to the various sub-committees of Council.

Revised Schedule of Meetings

Members noted the revised schedule of meetings.

3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 25 March 2009

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 March 2009 were proposed by Mr David Thompson and seconded by Mr Jim Collins as a true and accurate record. A copy was signed by the Chairman.

Action points

The Acting Chief Executive reported on the following :

Corporate

- The meeting with the Chief Executive Designate of ESA took place on 8 April. He confirmed that where appointments were made he would work with organisations to ensure the business need was fulfilled.

The funding for the Curriculum, Assessment and Examinations will remain the same, however, it was confirmed that the implementation activity will be wound down and the emphasis will be on curriculum and assessment research and development.

The Chairman of the Regulation, Qualifications and Lifelong Learning Committee stated that there was a need to retain an implementation programme for Key Stage 3 Assessment and asked that this be kept on the agenda for further discussions.

- It was confirmed that the CCEA Council would not continue beyond the 31 December 2008

The Chairman advised that the Board of ESA would be different from that of the existing affected organisations, however he anticipated that professional representation would be required on the ESA sub-committees.

Qualifications

- *Occupational Studies* : the outcomes of the recent consultation were presented to the Regulation, Qualifications and Lifelong Learning committee. Members made suggestions for further work to be carried out in this area before recommendations can be put forward for Council consideration.

These will come forward to the next appropriate meeting of Council

- *Functionality* : it was confirmed that the panel was happy that this was fully embedded and it was noted that England now appeared to be taking this approach.

General

The Chairman wished to pay tribute to the members of the CASS service for their contributions to the training of teachers throughout the province.

4 14-19

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Katrina Godfrey, Director of Raising Standards (RS) to the meeting.

The Director of RS thanked members for the opportunity to speak to the Council regarding policy and advised that although the policy was at an advanced stage there was still a considerable amount of work required.

The presentation focused on the three key elements of the education post-14 policy :

- Extending opportunities
- Improving schools
- Recognising achievement.

The Director of RS confirmed that :

- There should be stronger relationships between the learning area communities, schools and employers to ensure that the learning experience meets the needs of young people.
- There is a need to engage more effectively with families, communities and businesses regarding the value of education and the school – business interface.
- It is crucial to increase the range of pathways through the entitlement framework and that this be realised through the 24 courses available post-14. These will have the same credibility and currency as traditional qualifications.

Members agreed that the school-business interface was important however, they recognised that some businesses, whilst willing to participate, did not have the capacity to do so.

The Chairman of the Regulation, Qualifications and Lifelong Learning Committee sought clarification on regulatory responsibilities within 14-19. The Acting Chief Executive confirmed that all vocational qualifications would be regulated by DEL and the general and applied GCE and GCSE qualifications by DE.

Members expressed concern at this arrangement and stated that there was a need for one single regulatory authority in Northern Ireland. The Acting Chief Executive said that this arrangement is subject to an early review in 2011.

The Chairman of Council sought clarification on the current status of the two departments' (DE and DEL) joint vision for 14-19. The Director of RS confirmed that DE was clear on key components and how these would be discharged for the age group within DE's responsibilities. She stated that DE was committed to finalising the policy.

The Chairman of Council welcomed this commitment and said that it would be preferable if one body was responsible for 14-19 going into ESA. The Director of RS confirmed that ESA would not have responsibility for vocational qualifications, however, there is a need to ensure that appropriate provision is provided for this cohort of young people.

Occupational Studies

The Chairman of the Audit and Risk Committee said that there was some confusion in the system regarding the proposed changes to the Occupational Studies courses.

The Chairman of Council expressed concern that the feedback from stakeholders had not been taken into account in the original consultation and welcomed the fact that an additional year had been granted.

The Director of RS confirmed that an additional year was necessary to allow for adequate consultation with all stakeholders. She advised that feedback to date showed that centres and learners were not happy with the groupings without flexibility – further work is required.

Members agreed that an appropriate, well balanced regulatory process was required for occupational studies.

Entitlement Framework

The Director of RS advised that collaborative arrangements were well underway. However a considerable amount of work was still required to put in place a meaningful Entitlement Framework by 2013. Area based planning will submit a specific set of recommendations to DE who will issue clear direction to all stakeholders.

It was confirmed that milestone targets will be put in place during this academic year and guidance for schools up to 2013 will be issued.

The Director of RS asked members that if they had any other related issues they wished to raise they should contact her directly.

The Chairman thanked the Director of RS for her informative presentation and contribution to the meeting and for her offer to discuss related issues outside of the Council meeting

5 Education Strategy

Curriculum and Assessment Report

The Chairperson of the Curriculum and Assessment Committee confirmed that the committee had not met since the last meeting of Council.

The Director of Education Strategy (ES) advised that the main focus over the last few months had been the delivery of a wide range of activities. He reported on the following :

- To support the implementation of the new curriculum a range of new materials continue to be produced these are available hard copy and also through the NI curriculum website.

The Director of ES advised that although the majority of development work around the curriculum has now taken place it was important that an ongoing support programme continue and formal arrangements be put in place going forward.

- The launch of the Primary Languages microsite took place on 17 June. This was in collaboration with colleagues from the Education and Library Boards.
- INCAS – currently in the last year of rolling out the 3 year programme on INCAS assessments.

This has been a significant implementation programme and by the end of August 2009 all Years 4-7 teachers will have had face-to-face training on using the tool and understanding the assessment data.

- Assessment arrangements – advice has been provided around the new assessment arrangements and a comparability study has been requested on legacy levels of attainment with proposed levels of progression. The deadline for this is 31 July 2009.

Decisions arising out of the consultation on regulations are expected before the end of December 2009.

- Irish-medium : a team has been put in place and significant progress has been made since March 2009.
- PMB : the Department of Education (DE) wrote to the co-chairs of PMB requesting co-ordinated plans to support the revised curriculum up to the establishment of ESA and proposals up to 2013. This piece of work was submitted on 15 June 2009. The letter also advised that PMB would not exist beyond 31 December 2009, however other arrangements would be put in place to take the work forward.

The Chairman thanked the Director of ES for the update.

The Chairman of the Regulation, Qualifications and Lifelong Learning Committee expressed concern regarding the delivery of assessment at Key Stage 3 and asked to meet with the Director of ES outside of the meeting. It was agreed that this would be arranged.

6 Qualifications

Regulation, Qualifications and Lifelong Learning Committee Report : 27 May 2009

The Chairman of the Committee drew members' attention to the minutes provided. He reported on the following :

Update on GCSE/GCE Criteria/Qualifications Development : agreement has been reached to develop three different subject criteria for *GCSE English* and a recommendation has been put forward to the Department of Education (DE) for consideration.

The criteria development for *Science* is underway with the consultation taking place between mid-June and 30 September 2009. The outcomes will be presented to the next meeting of this committee.

Following the completion of the rules governing controlled assessment the science working group will be re-constituted to consider implications for *GCSE Science* provision in Northern Ireland.

An extensive consultation will be conducted on the review of Mathematics. Members were advised that it was important to seek substantial input into this review and if necessary additional events would be held to ensure adequate feedback was obtained.

Review of GCE/GCSE Standards : the committee received an assurance that standards were being maintained and any issues relating to an awarding body would be addressed in action plans over a period of time.

Structure of Occupational Studies : the committee discussed the feedback from the consultation on the structure of Occupational Studies in detail and agreed that further work was required, including consultation with the Sector Skills Councils.

An additional meeting had taken place on 15 June regarding the subject groupings. A Council member who attended this meeting confirmed that a considerable amount of discussion had taken place and the possibility of sampler groups had been raised. The outcomes have not yet been finalised.

The Acting Chief Executive advised that the proposals would need to go forward to Council for final ratification at its October meeting and that the alternative method outside of the committee schedule be used to progress this.

The Chairman of the Audit and Risk Committee suggested that a sub-group of R&QF Committee and Council members be put together to discuss the proposals in order to meet the Council deadline. This was agreed.

Examinations Standards Project : the committee received a progress report on this project. Initial results show good correlation between Key Stage 3 results and GCSE grades. This has provided a good basis for the further work required.

GCSE Specifications Revision : members were asked to participate in the Quality Assurance process similar to that for the GCE review. This has been progressed and meetings underway.

It was confirmed that the first meeting of the internal approval group had taken place with the final meeting on 18 June. Once all of the issues raised have been closed off a final assurance document will be signed off by the Chairmen of Council and the Committee.

SEN Qualifications Reference Group : this group has been set up in order to ensure that learners have access to a wider range of qualifications tailored to suit their needs.

Joint Meeting between Curriculum and Qualifications : 10 June 2009

The Chairs of Curriculum & Assessment and Regulation, Qualifications and Lifelong Learning have met with the relevant senior officers and identified common areas for progression.

These meetings will be arranged as required. It was agreed that the Chairperson of the Curriculum & Assessment Committee be invited to attend the next meeting of the Regulation, Qualifications and Lifelong Learning Committee.

The Directors of Qualifications and Education Strategy would attend both committees to ensure the common issues are being addressed from both perspectives.

7 Corporate

Audit & Risk Committee Report : 14 May 2009

The Chairman of the Committee drew members' attention to the detail of the minutes provided. He reported on the following :

Non-compliance : 7 invoices over £1,500 had been submitted without an authorised purchase order. It was agreed that the appropriate controls would be put in place to prevent this recurring. The Acting Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services would deal with the relevant personnel.

Accounts Direction : the committee received an assurance that all key milestones in this area had been met.

Members were advised that a set of Management Accounts and a Statement of Internal Control would be prepared during November/December 2009 for final sign-off by the Council.

Risk management framework and key risks presentation : the committee received a detail presentation. It was agreed that each Director be invited to speak to their individual risks at the next round of meetings.

Provision has also been made for an additional meeting should this be required.

Accommodation Risks : the committee commended the work undertaken in this area. A further review would take place in September to provide an assurance that this has been successful.

Annual Assurance Report : the committee noted that an adequate framework was in place to ensure the achievement of the Council's objectives.

Audit opinion year end 31 March 2009 : the internal auditor reported a 'satisfactory' opinion for this period.

• **Harmonisation Risks**

C/80/3

The Chairman of the Audit & Risk Committee advised that this was a living document and would evolve as we progress towards ESA. Issues will be deleted once signed off and added as identified.

He wished to place on record his thanks to the Business Assurance Manager and TMT in co-ordinating this document.

Members were happy with the information provided.

Business Committee Report : 3 June 2009

The minutes of the Business Committee meeting were tabled for members' information.

The Chairman of the Committee reported on the following:

Accommodation : the committee received an assurance that the work had been completed on time and within budget. All relevant health and safety checks have taken place and the final invoices would not exceed £30,000.

End of Committee Report : it was agreed that a handover document from Council encompassing the work of the sub-committees would be produced. The Business Committee would produce a report which would be separate from the Accounts and Statement of Internal Control.

Finance and Planning : the committee discussed the finance report and were content with the performance considering the conditions CCEA had operated under during the 08/09 year.

The Capital Plan was completed in full and on time.

Draft Annual Report : the committee discussed the draft report in detail and agreed to include the Chairman's Foreword. This was tabled for Council approval.

• **Draft Annual Report & Accounts 2008/09**

C/80/4

The Chairman of Council confirmed that the Business Committee had approved the document to come forward for Council ratification.

Subject to the inclusion of the Chairman's Foreword the Annual Report and Accounts 2008/09 was ratified by Council and was proposed and seconded by Mr David Thompson and Mr John Wilkinson respectively.

Operational Plan 2009/10 : members were happy with the information provided.

With regard to the Entitlement Framework an assurance was given that sufficient funding had been factored into the 09/10 budget to progress work in this area.

Business Development Strategy : the document was discussed in detail and several issues raised (detailed in the Business Committee minutes).

The CFO advised that the amendments had now been made and the document would not be progressed until the new Director for Curriculum, Assessment and Examinations was in place.

Draft Partnerships Policy : the committee agreed with the approach taken and accepted the policy. The Chairman of Council asked that it go forward to Council for ratification.

- **Draft Partnerships Policy**

C/80/5

The Chairman of the Audit & Risk Committee suggested that risks be drawn up with regard to the partnerships. The CFO advised that a template had already been drafted for risks to be recorded and that this would be attached to the policy.

Subject to this revision the policy was ratified by Council and proposed and seconded by Mr Jim Collins and Mr Martin Bowen respectively.

8 Any other business

14-19

The Chairman asked members that if they wished to discuss any issues arising out of the 14-19 presentation they should contact him outside of this meeting.

Occupational Studies

The Chairman asked members for expressions of interest for the Occupational Studies panel. Mrs Dorothy Black; Mr Martin Bowen and Mr John Wilkinson agreed to join this group.

9 Date of next meeting

The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting of Council would take place on **Thursday 1 October 2009 at 10.00 am.**

He thanked members for their contributions to the meeting and wished them a restful summer break.