

## **COUNCIL**

Minutes of the one hundred and fourth meeting of Council held on Tuesday 18 December 2012 at 10.00 am in Room 115, CCEA HQ, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

**Present :** Mrs H McClenaghan (Acting Chair)                      Mr J Clarke  
Ms P O'Farrell    Mrs D Black  
Mr J Wilkinson     Mr D Thompson  
Ms M Crilly

Mr M Quinn (Director, Corporate Services)  
Ms AM Duffy (Director, Qualifications)  
Mr R Clugston (Management Accountant)  
Mr R McCune (Regulation & Accreditation Manager – Items 7)  
Miss R Kennedy (Business Manager, Education Strategy)

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

### **1 Apologies**

An apology was received from Mr J Collins.

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

The Chairperson welcomed members to the meeting, in particular Mr Robert Clugston who was deputising for Mr John Daly. Miss Ruth Kennedy would be present at future Council and Committee meetings.

Mr Roger McCune would attend for Item 8.

#### *Appointment of Chair and Council Members*

It was confirmed that the recruitment process for CCEA Chair and Council members was completed. No further information was available.

#### *Minister's Visit : 22 November 2012*

Members were advised that the Minister for Education visited CCEA on 22 November. The main focus was examinations modernisation. The Chair wished to pay tribute for the excellent organisation of the visit and asked that her thanks be passed on to all staff involved.

The Director of Qualifications (DoQ) paid tribute to the energy of the staff who were involved in the presentations and wished to place on record her thanks for the excellent contributions.

#### *FOI Requests*

Members were updated on the recent FOI requests.

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) drew attention to the papers provided and confirmed that work had begun on a 3-year corporate plan which would fully reflect DE's priorities for education.

Members noted the information provided.

#### *Remuneration Committee*

The Acting Chair confirmed that a short meeting of the Remuneration Committee would be convened at the end of Council business.

### **3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 October 2012**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 October 2012 were proposed by Mr John Wilkinson and seconded by Mrs Dorothy Black as a true and accurate record. A copy was signed by the Chairperson.

#### **Action Points**

Members noted the status of the action points.

### **4 Correspondence**

Members noted the correspondence in relation to :

- *Statutory Assessment at End of Key Stages 1 and 2 : Revisions to the assessment documents (31 October 2012) and response from Interim Chief Executive (13 November 2012).*
- *GCSE English (15 November 2012).*
- *2012/13 Capital Budget Allocation (19 November 2012).*
- *Voluntary Severance Programme 2012-13*

Members noted that there would be no applications from CCEA for 2012-13.

- *Departmental End to Special Interventions: follow up review of CCEA External Events and associated Corporate Hospitality.*

Members welcomed this development. It was also confirmed that there would be no DE representatives on Council and Remuneration Committee going forward.

- *English Baccalaureate Certificates (16 November 2012).*

Members agreed it would be beneficial to monitor developments in this area.

- *The Education (Levels of Progression for Key Stages 1,2, and 3) Order NI 2012 (5 December 2012) (tabled)*

Members noted that in the school year 2012/13 the moderation arrangements at end of Key Stages 1 and 2 would operate on a voluntary basis. Discussions continue with the Unions on workload and manageability issues.

## **5 Governance and Accountability**

### ***Accountability Review Meeting : 6 December 2012***

The Acting Chair advised that the minutes had not yet been finalised and would be issued in due course.

- Computer Based Assessment

She reported that the Permanent Secretary was concerned about the technical issues schools had been experiencing with Computer Based Assessment. DE would write to CCEA requesting a formal review be carried out.

Members discussed the issues in detail and whilst it was recognised that these issues identified were outside of CCEA's control, going forward, any issues raised by teachers that could be a potential risk for future assessments should be noted, followed up and discussed with DE.

Other issues discussed were:

- Progress in relation to PfG Attainment Targets
- Financial Management
- Performance Management
- Regulation of Qualifications

## **6 Finance and Planning**

### ***Finance Committee Report : 28 November 2012***

The Chairman of the Committee reported on the following :

- Buildings Maintenance : although the planned schedule of work was now back on target, the committee expressed concerns about the difficulties CCEA had experienced with the new buildings maintenance contractor and asked for these to be raised with contract management.
- Qualifications Technology Roadmap :the business case would come forward to the next meeting of the committee for approval.
- Finance Report as at 31 October. An overall underspend of £434K was reported. Income has been increased by £595K to reflect additional earned income identified in September.
- January Monitoring Round : Bids for the (1) Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications £20K and (2) Substitute Cover for non-CCEA GCSE English resits : £20K have been submitted to DE for consideration.

- Pension Auto-Enrolment and HMRC Real Time Information Projects : have been initiated as a result of the Pensions Act.
- Procurement Update : Members asked the Interim Chief Executive to write to the Permanent Secretary highlighting the difficulties CCEA were experiencing and to seek assistance in progressing these.
- Business Cases : 2 business cases were approved by the committee.
- Policies : a draft policy on Development of Policy and Carrying Out/Participation in Consultations was considered. A revised draft would be brought back to the Committee.

***Finance Report as at 31 October 2012***

***Paper C/104/1***

An overall underspend of £434K was reported at this time. The main areas of underspend were :

- Salaries (£180K)
- Teacher release (£180K)
- Professional fees (£63K)
- Facilities management (£49K)

An overall underspend of £220K was reported as at 30 November 2012, which at 2% exceeded the 1% tolerance limit set by DE.

Members were advised that a detailed finance report was available on request.

***January Monitoring Round***

Members noted a release in funding of £535K back to DE for this monitoring round and were content with the supporting information provided.

***Statement of Financial Position as at 31 October 2012***

***Paper C/104/2***

Members noted the information provided.

***DE Corporate Plan 2012-15 and Business Plan 2012-13***

***Paper C/104/3***

This item was dealt with under Chair's Business.

**7 Audit**

***Audit & Risk Committee Report : 12 December 2012***

The Chairperson of the Committee reported on the following :

- Non-compliance with purchasing arrangements: there were no unauthorised purchases over £1,500 presented.
- Single tender actions: 12 relating to general purchases and 16 relating to external venues were reported. Members were assured that the appropriate processes were being followed.

### *Risk Management & Audit*

- Quarterly Assurance Statement (1 July – 30 Sept 12): five significant risks were highlighted. The issue of CCEA's access to a CoPE was also discussed.
- Internal Audit activity: fieldwork has been undertaken on three reviews: procurement; pensions, travel expenses and other financial systems; and follow up to Question Paper production. Reports will come forward to next meeting.
- NIAO: two studies were ongoing within the education sector, '*A strategy to improve outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy*' and '*Pupil attendance at grant aided primary, post primary and special schools*'. Reports would be published in January/February 2013.
- DE Update : The process of appointing Council Chair and Council members was completed. DE would notify CCEA of the outcomes in mid-January 2013.

### *Regulation of Qualifications*

- January 2013 Readiness Report : committee approved the actions taken by relevant staff to ensure operational readiness for the January 2013 examinations series.

Members also discussed :

- Quarterly report on regulatory undertaking in response to examination errors enquiry from Summer 2011; and
- CCEA monitoring of Mathematics action plan – Summer 2011 series.

### *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting*

- Operational readiness for implementation of statutory assessment arrangements 2013 : committee approved the actions taken by relevant staff to ensure operational readiness for the implementation of the assessment and moderation of cross-curricular skills (KS 1, 2 and 3).
- Computer Based Assessment : members received a detailed outline of the technical issues schools had experienced since September 2012. The Interim Chief Executive has commissioned ASM to undertake an internal audit review in early February 2013.

## **8 Education**

### ***Education Committee Report : 6 December 2012***

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December were provided for members' information.

The Interim Chair advised that members were updated on :

- GCSE English : following the issues encountered with the Summer Award 2012 in England and Wales.
- Proposals to reform A Levels in England.
- Admission to HEI's in the South of Ireland.

Details on the above are provided in the minutes.

- Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications: members were advised that the on-line questionnaire was launched on 21 November with a closing date of 21 January. The first interim report was due on 31 January 2013 (this would be a Statement of Progress) and would be approved by the Acting Chair of Council in advance.
- Entitlement Framework Accreditation – Update: 7 applied and 4 vocational specifications have been submitted for accreditation. It was hoped that applied specifications would be in schools for first teaching from September 2013.

Members asked that a circular be issued reminding schools of the new qualifications on offer from September 2013.

- Computer Based Assessment: members were updated on the two main issues identified.
- End of Key Stage Assessment - update on new assessment arrangements: members noted the letter tabled from NI Assembly.

### ***Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications***

The DoCS advised that the project was being conducted within tight project controls and was on schedule. He reported the following:

- On-line consultation: 228 responses had been received to date.
- Invitations have been issued to the Expert Panel and it was hoped to arrange an induction as early as possible in January 2013.

The Regulation & Accreditation Manager advised on the latest position with England and Wales and agreed to circulate a summary of the main areas under discussion. He confirmed that CCEA would continue to monitor developments and report as appropriate.

It was confirmed that an update report would be issued to DE on 31 January 2013 and this would be approved by the Acting Chair of Council. The report would also be provided to Council. A further Interim Report is due by 31 March with the final report being submitted by 30 June 2013.

Council will discuss and approve the final report in advance.

A Council member commented on the subjects within the Entitlement Framework and said it was important that those offered match the needs of young people in Northern Ireland. He welcomed the developments in this area.

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

***C/104/4***

The Acting Chair reminded members that Council was made aware of serious technical issues at the previous meeting.

The Business Manager, Education Strategy drew attention to paper **C/104/4** and gave a detailed report on the issues which have arisen since September 2012. Two main issues have been identified :

- Changes to the C2K managed service platform :the platform changes on a daily basis – this will continue through 2013.

A by-pass (of the managed services) was put in place as a temporary fix. This significantly reduced the number of errors.

- The ability of the managed service to process encrypted data (https).Discussions continue on this issue.

Members recognised that the technical issues reported were outside of CCEA's control and asked that all risks be monitored closely and raised with DE on a regular basis. It was Council's view that CCEA cannot be accountable for technical failures not within its responsibility/control.

Members were advised that moving forward CCEA would propose formal partnership arrangements with C2K. The already established strategic group will be set up to manage technical issues and identify risks and mitigating strategies. An accountability matrix will be drawn up between CCEA, C2K and Northgate and provided to the CCEA Executive who will report back to DE.

Members discussed and sought clarification on a range of issues. They expressed concern about potential for CCEA's reputational damage given that the technical issues were outside of CCEA's control and asked that this be identified as a 'single risk' within CCEA's risk register and that it clearly states that CCEA cannot mitigate this as it is outside CCEA's responsibility/control.

It was also suggested that this be progressed with DE. The Acting Chair confirmed that this had been discussed at the recent GAR meeting with Senior Officials who advised that they would provide the necessary support going forward.

She confirmed that she would write to the Permanent Secretary setting out the issues and difficulties CCEA were currently facing and seek formal support in progressing these matters.

**Attendance of Representative Bodies at CCEA Awarding Meetings** **C/104/5**

The DoQ advised that the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) has requested attendance at CCEA's awarding meetings in an observer capacity.

Members considered the information provided in Appendix 2 and following discussion agreed with the proposal put forward.

*The proposal to decline the request and offer a briefing session outlining the awarding process was formally approved by Council. This briefing session would be offered to all professional bodies.*

**GCSE English Report (loss of candidates)** **C/104/6**

The DoQ gave a brief overview on the outcomes of the investigation on the loss of candidates for GCSE English in 2010.

She reported on the action taken to date and drew attention to the action plan to 'win back' centres.

A Council member asked if the CCEA specification could be checked against the other Awarding Body (AB) specifications to ensure they were user friendly. The DoQ agreed that further work was required and that key differences between CCEA specification structures and other ABs would be explored.

Any proposal to revise the specification would need to be agreed with the Regulator.

Council would be updated on any proposed revisions at the next appropriate meeting.

## **9 Any Other Business**

None identified

## **10 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 20 March 2013 at 10.00 am.

The Acting Chair wished members and officers a Merry Christmas.