

## **COUNCIL**

Minutes of the one hundred and eleventh meeting of Council held on Wednesday 18 June 2014 at 10.00 am in Room 115, CCEA HQ, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

**Present :** Mr T Carson (Chairman) Mrs J Mussen  
Mr M Donnelly Mr R Thompson  
Mr E Cullen Ms C Gibson  
Ms M Crilly Dr P Cunningham

Mrs C Harpur Mr N Morton  
Mr K Scally

Mr R Hanna (Interim Chief Executive)  
Ms AM Duffy (Director of Qualifications)  
Mr J Daly (Finance Manager)  
Mr R McCune (Regulation & Accreditation Manager)

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

### **Introduction**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and on behalf of Council, congratulated Mr Neill Morton on his recent award of OBE.

He advised that Mr Gary Kennedy (former member of CCEA's Education Committee), had been awarded the MBE.

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Dr A Kerr, Mr J Wilkinson, Mrs R Cowan and Ms R Kennedy.

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

The Chair advised that a closed session of Council would take place at the end of formal business.

#### *FOI Requests*

Members noted the most recent FOI requests. A Council member asked if appropriate to do so, could the source of the request be disclosed on the log (perhaps on an annual basis). The Chairman asked for this to be discussed with the Information Officer.

#### *Industrial Action*

The Interim Chief Executive updated members on the latest position regarding Industrial Action in relation to the TOIL.

### **3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2014**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March were proposed by Dr Peter Cunningham and seconded by Mrs Christine Harpur as a true and accurate record.

A copy was signed by the Chairman.

### *Action Points*

Members noted the status of the action points.

## **4 Correspondence**

Members noted various correspondence in relation to :

- 2014/14 Budget
- CCEA Work Programme 2013/14
- Outstanding Pay Remits
- CPD Programme 2014/15
- Endorsed Textbooks and GIRO D'ITALIA

### *Outstanding Pay Remits*

The Interim Chief Executive advised that progress had been made on contractual payments to staff, however some remained outstanding. Discussions were ongoing and it was hoped that a resolution would be reached in the near future.

A Council member suggested that given the amount of concern expressed at recent Finance and Audit & Risk Committee meetings (and also previous Council meetings) that perhaps it would be appropriate for the Chair of Council to write to the Permanent Secretary thanking him for the progress made, however, stating Council's considerable concerns that issues have not been resolved in relation to Business Managers and the Top Management Team. It was also suggested that the letter should draw attention to CCEA's legal advice included with the pay remit. The Chair agreed to consider this.

The Interim Chief Executive wished to place on record that CCEA although staff remained dedicated, they continued to feel undervalued.

## **5 Governance and Accountability**

### *Minutes of the Governance and Accountability Review Meeting : 17 April 2014*

Members noted the information provided.

## **6 Finance and Planning**

The Chairman reminded members that the Finance Committee had fulfilled their scrutiny function on all financial matters.

### *Finance Committee Reports 9 April and 28 May 2014*

The Chairman advised that two meetings of the Finance Committee had taken place since the last Council meeting. The following reports were provided :

#### *9 April 2014*

The minutes were included for members' information. The main issues discussed were :

- Finance Report as at 28 February 2014
- Allocation of Budget 2014/15

An update was also provided on procurement activity. Two business cases were approved by the Committee.

28 May 2014

The minutes were tabled for members' information. The Chairman reported on the following :

- *Interim End of Year Finance Report as at 31 March 2014* : an overall underspend of £69K (0.22%) against DE allocated funding had been achieved. This was well within the 1% target. Capital underspend was also less than 1%.

The Chairman, on behalf of Council, commended all staff on this excellent result in particular the significant work carried out by the Finance Team, budgetholders and Management Board.

- *2014/15 Budget and Proposal to Address Shortfall* : the committee discussed and approved the proposal as an appropriate way forward to address the shortfall. This was on the Council agenda for final ratification.

The Committee commended officers on meeting this requirement and suggested that Council draw to DE's attention the educational impact of some of this work not being progressed, in particular the Road Safety Project.

Updates were provided on pay remits and procurement activity. Two business cases were approved by the Committee.

Members noted the information provided.

***Finance Report as at 31 March 2014*** **C/111/1**

Members were satisfied with the information provided.

***Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2014*** **C/111/2**

Members were satisfied with the information provided.

***2014/15 Budget*** **C/111/3**

The Interim Chief Executive provided an overview of the main pressures identified for 2014/15. He confirmed that following correspondence from DE a significant review of all budgets lines across the organisation was carried out by budget holders. Work has been reprioritised to meet the pressures, with a separate bid of £1.5M submitted for the Review of Specifications for 2014/15.

Members discussed the information provided and expressed concern about the educational impact on schools should some of this work be delayed or not progressed. It was suggested that the areas of concern be identified and placed on the risk register.

Members asked for robust representations to be made to DE, stating that it was an unrealistic expectation for CCEA to achieve DE's targets, given the substantial cut to the budget.

The Interim Chief Executive assured members that there were no 'nice to do' projects, all work was essential. He confirmed that project costs could be cut and staff deployed to other areas to continue work.

Following discussion and clarification on a range of issues, members suggested that due to the reluctance of Council to approve the budget and the challenges the organisation has had to deal with, the Chairman consider seeking a meeting with the Minister to clearly state Council's concerns about the budget position.

The Chairman asked that a briefing paper be drafted about the impact budget cuts will have on all of the work across the organisation will have on schools should work cease in a number of crucial areas. In particular, the potential impact on schools.

Members agreed the budget proposals.

### ***Draft 2013/14 Annual Report and Accounts***

***C/111/4***

The Chair confirmed that the Draft 2013/14 Annual Report and Accounts had been considered at the Audit and Risk Committee on 11 June and was being presented to Council for final consideration, and if appropriate, ratification/approval.

The Interim Chief Executive wished to place on record his thanks to all managers for the substantial amount of work completed, in particular the budget holder group; and the Finance Manager and his team, who provided a huge amount of support to all staff involved. Council members concurred with this.

The Finance Manager confirmed all of the deadlines throughout the process had been met. He advised that some minor changes were required before the document was finalised.

Members were satisfied with the information provided and formally approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2013/14.

It was confirmed that the document would be laid before the NI Assembly during the first week in July.

## **7 Audit**

### ***Audit and Risk Committee Reports***

The Chair (of Council) advised that two meetings of the Audit & Risk Committee had taken place since the Council met on 12 March, (16 April and 11 June 2014).

#### ***16 April 2014***

In the absence of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Mr Donnelly drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided and reported on the main issues discussed. These included :

- Non-compliance with CCEA's purchasing arrangements (Nov 13 – Feb 14) : it was noted that despite mitigations, instances continued to arise.
- Quarterly Assurance Statement : December 2013;
- Summary of the Annual Compliance Report on the use of External Consultants and the Internal Audit Annual Assurance Report 2013/14.

There were also a range of reports provided from the Regulation of Qualifications area.

The main issues discussed were :

- CCEA's Annual Governance Statement and Corporate Risk Register: subject to minor amendments the Statement was approved.
- Computer Based Assessment: an overview of the 2013 Pilot was provided and a summary of the recommendations arising from the Harking Report was also discussed.

*11 June 2014*

Mr Donnelly drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided and highlighted the main issues discussed at the meeting:

- A summary of the key principles with the Audit and Risk Handbook. Relevant training for members was being sourced.
- Non-compliance : unauthorised purchases for March – April 2014. Members noted the range of actions undertaken and strategies for each unit (currently being drafted).
- Draft Annual Report and Accounts : discussed and approved to go forward to Council.
- Regulation of Qualifications : a report on operational readiness for the Summer 2014 Examinations Series was received; and the General Conditions of Recognition Statement of Compliance 2014 approved to go forward to Council for final ratification.

Updates were also received from the NIAO and DE and a summary of the Internal Audit Activity provided.

Clarification was sought on the screening exercise for examiners provided to the Audit and Risk Committee. It was agreed that the Audit & Risk Paper be provided to Council for information only.

## **8 Education**

### *Education Committee Reports*

The Chair (of Council) advised that two meetings of the Education Committee had taken place since the Council met on 12 March, (27 March and 21 May 2014).

*27 March 2014*

The Chair of the Committee drew attention to the minutes provided. The main issues discussed were :

- Minister's Statement on Evaluation and Assessment, in particular : Computer Based Assessment; End of Key Stage Assessment and the Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications.

Members welcomed the Minister's acceptance of all of the recommendations arising from the Harkin Report.

Updates were provided on SEN provision for Entry Level Qualifications and support events for the new qualifications on the Entitlement Framework. A presentation on Special Consideration applications from the Summer 2013 series was also provided.

21 May 2014

The main issues discussed were:

- AS Weightings within Revised A Level Qualifications and Accreditation of CCEA A/AS Level Specifications. Both items were on the Council agenda.

The Committee recommended the AS Weightings issue be brought to Council for further debate as a consensus could not be reached.

- Computer Based Assessment : Reviews and Reports : members considered and agreed the recommendations to be brought to Council for approval and forwarding to DE.

Committee members asked that further clarification be sought on the roles and responsibilities of C2K and CCEA regarding procurement issues.

Updates were provided on SEN : progress against the recommendations from the research report; the support programme for the Entitlement Framework and Statutory Assessment.

A Curriculum Showcase presentation on Supporting Talking and Listening across Key Stages was also provided.

Members noted the information provided.

## **Regulatory Issues**

### ***AS Weighting within Revised A Level Qualifications***

***C/111/5***

The Chair of the Education Committee outlined the concerns of the committee. The Regulation & Accreditation Manager confirmed that he had taken account of the concerns raised and confirmed further clarification had been provided in paper C/111/5. He drew attention to the detail of the paper and explained that consultation on the proposed re-weighting had taken place. Feedback showed the preferred option would be to change to 40/60.

Following discussion and clarification on a range of issues, members were content to approve the recommendation of re-weighting from 50/50 to 40/60 be put forward to DE

### ***Accreditation of A/AS Level Specifications***

***C/111/6***

The Chair of the Education Committee confirmed that members had discussed the issue were content with the proposals for the accreditation process for A/AS Level Specifications. The Committee recommended the proposals come forward to Council for endorsement.

Council members were satisfied with the recommendation from the Education Committee and formally endorsed the proposals.

### ***Assessment of Practical Skills in A Level Sciences***

***C/111/7***

The Regulation & Accreditation Manager advised that the timescale did not permit this issue to come before the Education Committee at its last meeting.

He drew attention to paper **C/115/7** in particular the recommendations arising from the findings of the consultation.

Following discussion, members agreed the recommendations could go forward to DE, subject to further investigation.

### **Criteria for Accreditation of Entry Level Qualifications**

**C/111/8**

The Regulation & Accreditation Manager advised that Entry Level Criteria, National Qualifications Framework (NQF) had been updated to reflect the requirements of the NI Curriculum and needs of learners

Members endorsed the criteria for the Accreditation of Entry Level Qualifications to the NQF to be offered in Northern Ireland.

The Chair of the Education Committee asked that, in future, items such as these be brought to the Committee before Council to ensure the Corporate Governance process is being followed.

### *OfQual Logo*

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that, following discussion, the OfQual Logo would not be on the GCSE certificates this year.

### **Qualifications**

#### **Use of Data – PISA : GCSE and Key Stage 3**

**C/111/9**

The Director of Qualifications provided an overview of the information provided in paper **C/115/9**.

Members noted the proposed next steps and challenges ahead and were content that the Research Report be submitted to DE.

It was agreed that the out-workings of the report would come forward to the Education Committee for debate as appropriate.

### **Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting**

#### **Computer Based Assessment :Review and Reports**

**C/111/10**

The Interim Chief Executive updated members on developments since the last meeting :

- a mini trial with a small number of schools (8 on-line) was conducted (2-13 June) to test the technical aspects of the delivery of the software to ensure it runs on the C2K platform.
- 200 schools have volunteered to take part in a wider trial during the Autumn term; this will be conducted on a phased approach and on the transformed platform only.

### *Report of Evaluations and Independent Reviews*

The Interim Chief Executive highlighted the summary of the various reports, in particular page 2 of paper C/115/10. He drew attention to the summary of lessons learnt and the recommendations arising out the 'Harkin' Report.

Members noted that there had been no progress on the recommendation around the roles and responsibilities to address the governance issues between CCEA/C2K and WELB. CCEA would continue to raise the issues with C2K, WELB and DE as appropriate.

He advised that DE have commissioned CCEA to take forward work, looking at a range of options for CBA, including the possibility of CCEA developing its own assessments working with a commercial company, with rights owned by CCEA/DE. Draft Advice would come forward for consideration at the Education Committee and to Council for approval before 30 November 2014.

## **9 Any Other Business**

None identified.

## **10 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting was confirmed as **Wednesday 8 October 2014** at 10.00 am.

The Chairman thanked members and officers for their input into the meeting.

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**CHAIRMAN**

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**DATE**