

CCEA

COUNCIL

Minutes of the one hundredth and first meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 20 June 2012 at 10.00 am in Room 115, CCEA, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

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

Mr A Arbuthnot (DE Observer)

Mr G Boyd (Interim Chief Executive)
Mr R Hanna (Director of Education Strategy)
Ms AM Duffy (Director of Qualifications)
Mr J Daly (Finance Manager)
Mr Roger McCune (Regulation & Accreditation Manager) Item 8

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms M Crilly; Mr D Thompson and Mr M Quinn.

2 Chair's Business

Committee Minutes

The Acting Chair advised that as the Finance and Audit & Risk Committees took place on 13 and 14 June the minutes were not yet finalised.

FOI Requests

Members were updated on the recent FOI requests.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 February 2012

Subject to the following amendment:

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- *Reform of GCE A Levels. The DE Observer said the issues have been **drawn to the attention of the Executive***

the minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Ms Patricia O'Farrell and seconded by Mr Jim Clarke.

4 Correspondence

From the 16 May meeting :*DE ALBs : Member/Chair Performance Appraisal*: the Acting Chair reported that DE had confirmed the appraisal process would re-commence once a new Chair had been appointed.

Members noted the correspondence (9 May 2012) from the Minister to Michael Gove on A Level Reforms.

5 Governance and Accountability

Date of next meeting

The next GAR meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 11 September 2012 at CCEA.

6 Finance and Planning

Finance Committee Report : 13 June 2012

The Chairman of the committee reported on the following :

- Finance Report as at 31 March 2012. Members discussed in detail the end of year position and noted the £762K underspend. It was recognised that the impact of industrial action resulting in fewer teacher release claims had been a significant, unavoidable factor.
- 2012/13 Initial Allocation. Members were concerned about the reduction in the support package for teachers for the new assessment arrangements and also that no account had been taken of CCEA's increased examination income. Both issues were to be raised at the GAR meeting on 20 June 2012.
- Procurement Update. Members were content that significant improvements were being seen in the procurement process.
- Business Cases and Policies. 3 business cases and 1 policy were approved by the committee.

Year End Report as at 31 March 2012

C/101/1

The Finance Manager (FM) confirmed an underspend of £762K at year end. The main issues were :the impact of industrial action leading to reduced teacher release claims; and efficiency savings in salaries and wages; external meetings, distribution, postage and print.

An additional income of £178K was generated because of higher examination sales than forecast.

Members were assured that CCEA has factored these savings into the business plan for 2012/13.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2012

C/101/2

Members noted the information provided.

2012/13 Work Programme and Financial Plan

C/101/3

The FM drew attention to paper **C/101/3**. The initial allocation represented a £950K shortfall. This included £800K relation to professional support services. Account had not been taken of CCEA's increased examinations income.

DE has rejected CCEA's request to access additional income in anticipation of increased earnings to address the £950K shortfall. As a result of this, significant cut backs in the DE sponsored work programme have been made.

Members expressed concern at this situation and asked that this be raised at the next GAR meeting, with a view to finding more efficient of allocating and utilising funding.

Work Programme Commissioning Letter

The FM advised that CCEA had asked for additional time to work through the programme and consult with stakeholders.

Clarification was sought on the priority areas within the work programme. It was confirmed that curriculum and qualification development areas have been completed and the emphasis was now on the statutory assessment arrangements.

The Director of Qualifications (DoQ) advised that the GCSE and GCE Reform, SEN and the Entitlement Framework have been omitted. DE has been made aware of this.

Issues related to proposals for the CCEA work plan 2012/13

C/101/3a

The Director of Education Strategy (DoES) reported that realising the savings required by DE would have implications for work planned for 2012/13 including the level of support provided for aspects of statutory assessment.

Some planned work would be cancelled - other work would be scaled back.

In respect of DE targets, these would all be met to some extent, but there would be a reduction in support provided to schools for the new assessment arrangements

Members said that the support given to teachers from CCEA was valued and there could be a negative reaction from schools if this support was reduced. Concern was also expressed at the scaling back of some projects, in particular, thinking skills and personal capabilities particularly given the emphasis on skills in the curriculum. Members suggested seeking other ways of continuing this provision at a low cost.

The DE representative confirmed that DE would work closely with CCEA to support and provide assistance to enable its statutory responsibilities to be fulfilled. However he advised that the budget cuts were system wide to allow as much funding as possible to be put into schools.

He confirmed that there would be opportunities to bid for additional resources and DE would work with CCEA to identify priorities in terms of budget spend. The DoES was asked to write to DE to raise concerns and set out implications of proposed cuts.

Members asked that their concern about the impact the budget cuts have had on CCEA's ability to support schools fully on the new assessment arrangements be expressed at the next GAR meeting. The Acting Chair agreed to do so.

7 Audit

Audit and Risk Committee Report : 14 June 2012

The Chair of the Committee reported on the following:

- Non-compliance with purchasing arrangements : a continuing downward trend in the frequency of incidents of non-compliances from December 2011 to March 2012 was reported.
- Single tender actions : 16 single tender actions awarded totalling £79,910.76. Members noted the detail provided and were assured that appropriate processes were being followed.
- National Fraud Initiative (NFI) : CCEA has been invited to participate in the NFI 2012/13.
- 2011/12 Draft Annual Report and Accounts : Members were satisfied that the process had been followed and all deadlines met. The draft was agreed pending minor changes and recommended to go forward to Council for final ratification.
- Annual Fraud Report :members noted that no fraud had been perpetrated within CCEA.
- Internal Audit Activity : members were provided with a detailed overview of the audits undertaken from January to May 2012. An overall assurance rating of 'satisfactory' was given for the Annual Assurance Report.
- NIAO Update :members were informed of the issue in relation to expired/rolling contracts.

It was confirmed that it was unlikely that this issue would impact on the audit report.

The NIAO representative advised he would be recommending an unqualified audit report.

- DE Update : the DE Observer advised that CCEA were to provide a management response to the external quality review of ASM.
- CCEA have been invited to join an education sector fraud forum.

Members also received a readiness report for the summer 2012 examinations series and noted that the actions from OfQual Stage 2 action plan had been completed.

The DoQ reported that Ofqual had monitored a sample of the new GCSE qualifications offered by AQA, Edexcel and OCR. She summarised the findings of the report and advised that CCEA would review any recommendations made in relation to CCEA's qualifications.

Members noted the information provided.

The FM gave an overview of the process and confirmed that PWC had not identified any issues with the figures.

Appendix 1 outlined the main changes since 2010/11.

The Interim Chief Executive said the Audit Office had complimented CCEA on the quality of the documentation provided for the Audit. He congratulated the Finance Manager and his team.

In relation to the expired/rolling contracts, he advised that this had been drawn to the attention of the auditors. He confirmed that the Finance Committee were fully aware of the efforts made to resolve these issues and it was agreed that, under the circumstances, CCEA needed to keep the organisation running. DE were fully informed and the Audit Office recognised that everything possible had been done to try to resolve this.

He was content that NIAO would be recommending an unqualified audit opinion.

Members were satisfied with the assurances received and ratified the 2011/12 Annual Report and Accounts. This was formally proposed by Mrs Patricia O'Farrell and seconded by Mr Jim Collins.

A copy was signed by the Chairperson and Chief Executive following the Council meeting.

The Accounts would be laid at the Assembly.

Members congratulated officers for their contributions to the work in these documents and thanked the Chairs of the Committees for their advice and guidance.

Update on Summer Examinations 2012

The DoQ updated members on the summer examinations series to date. She advised that the timetable would end on 25 June 2012 and reported on a few minor issues in relation to the conduct of examinations.

A full presentation and report would be provided to Council at its next meeting on 19 September 2012.

She advised that further correspondence had been received about mathematics questions and assured members that appropriate measures had been put in place to deal with this. An update would be provided as appropriate.

8 Education

The Acting Chair and Council congratulated Mr Roger McCune on his MBE

Education Committee Report : 30 May 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2012 were tabled for members' information. The Chair of the Committee reported on :

- First Year of SEN Qualifications :two SEN practitioners to be invited to next meeting of Committee to present their views on qualifications for SEN children.

- Grading for Occupational Studies : the grading model of Pass/Merit/Distinction and recommendation on the Draft Criteria were approved.
- GCSE/GCE Developments : on agenda for this meeting.
- Effects of Unitisation in 2009 GCSE Assessments : research will be undertaken on subject by subject to find out what assessments meets the needs of the subjects.

Members noted the information provided.

GCSE/GCE Developments

C/101/5

The Regulation and Accreditation Manager gave a detail overview of paper **C/101/5** and outlined the main issues arising. He advised that these had been discussed by CCEA Education Committee. Concern had been expressed about the comparability of qualifications across the UK and the importance of NI qualifications having currency and transferability.

Members noted that the Minister had written to his counterparts in Scotland and Wales seeking their views. The DE Observer confirmed that the Minister would meet his Welsh counterparts in July to discuss the situation. He has also asked senior DE Officials to enter into discussions with the local universities to see how they feel about the impending changes in England.

Members discussed the implications for Northern Ireland and agreed that the 3rd Option was an appropriate way forward at this time.

The Interim Chief Executive said that a number of issues needed to be considered and the Minister has asked that CCEA maintain a close watching brief on developments in England.

He assured members that it was CCEA's responsibility to ensure that qualifications provided reflect the needs of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, Economy and Society and that no child be disadvantaged.

Members asked to be kept informed on developments in this area.

9 Any Other Business

None identified.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as **Wednesday 19 September 2012 at 10.00 am**. This would focus on the Summer Examinations Series 2012.

The Acting Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions throughout the year and wished them a good summer break.