

CCEA

COUNCIL

Minutes of the one hundred and fifth meeting of Council held on Wednesday 20 March 2013 at 10.00 am in Room 115, CCEA HQ, 29 Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present : Mr T Carson (Chair)
Mrs D Black
Mr J Wilkinson
Ms M Crilly
Mrs C Harpur
Mrs R Cowan
Mr R Thompson

Mrs H McClenaghan
Mr D Thompson
Mr E Cullen
Dr P Cunningham
Mrs J Mussen
Mr M Donnelly

Mr R Hanna (Interim Chief Executive)
Mr M Quinn (Director, Corporate Services)
Ms AM Duffy (Director, Qualifications)
Mr J Daly (Manager, Financial Services)
Mr R McCune (Regulation & Accreditation Manager – Items 7)
Miss R Kennedy (Business Manager, Education Strategy)

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed members to the first formal meeting of the new Council.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr J Clarke.

2 Chair's Business

The Chair advised that although the papers were substantial for the meeting, sufficient time had been factored in for discussion and consideration.

There would be a short closed session for Council members only at the end of normal business.

CBA Issue

The Chairman reported that he and the Interim Chief Executive had met with the Minister on 19 March 2013 on an issue which arose on Computer Based Assessment.

The Interim Chief Executive explained that an error had been found in the calculation of standardised scores for the NILA Literacy computer-based assessment provided by Tribal and gave a full report on the circumstances of the problem.

He confirmed that he and the Business Manager, Education Strategy, had briefed the NITC and a communication had been issued to all schools.

Confirmation was sought that the issue had been completely rectified. The Interim Chief Executive assured members that the root cause had been identified and rectified; all elements of the assessment, including outcomes and reports were performing correctly.

The Chairman wished to place on record his thanks to all staff involved who undertook additional work following the identification of the issue. He confirmed he was content with the action taken and that DE had been informed within an acceptable timeframe.

Clarification was sought on :

- What steps can be taken to ensure this does not happen again.

It was confirmed that CCEA sets expectations under contract in terms of performance and seek assurances from 3rd parties that the services they provide meet CCEA's needs. CCEA also has quality assurance measures in place.

In this instance CCEA sought and received assurances that the error had been identified and rectified.

- Whether penalty clauses are written into contracts for 3rd party organisations and associated risks.

It was confirmed that the contract contained provision for payments that were subject to successful implementation. A corporate risk has been developed to include risks around 3rd party providers (to include mitigation measures).

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that the Director of Corporate Services had undertaken an assessment of these risks and a document highlighting these issues has been submitted to DE.

Members commended officers on the action taken within a very short timeframe and asked that the introduction of penalties be considered in this instance. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed he was taking legal advice on the contract and options around this.

Appointment of Council Members

The Chairman confirmed that the appointments process for additional Council members will commence in May. He will chair the interview panel.

It was also confirmed that the maximum number of Council members (including the Chair) would be 14.

FOI Requests

Members were updated on the recent FOI requests.

Committee Representation

The Chairman thanked members for submitting their committee preference and hoped that, as far as possible, first choices had been accommodated. (A copy of committee representation is attached to the minutes for information).

Chairs of Committees

The Chairman thanked Mrs Jennifer Mussen and Mr John Wilkinson for agreeing to chair the Education and Audit & Risk Committees, respectively. Mrs Helen McClenaghan would remain as Interim Chair of the Education Committee until 22 May 2013.

He confirmed he would chair the Finance Committee.

Vice Chairs

Thanks were also extended to Dr Peter Cunningham (Vice Chair : Audit & Risk); Mrs Rosemary Cowan (Vice Chair : Finance) and Mr Martin Donnelly (Vice Chair : Education).

Council Vice-Chair

Mrs Helen McClenaghan would remain as Vice-Chair of Council until the end of her term of office (30 September 2013). Following this an election would take place at the next appropriate Council meeting.

Council Workshop

A Council Workshop was confirmed for Thursday 11 April 2013 from 9.30am – 1.30 pm. The programme would be issued in due course.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 December 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 December 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 Chairman.

Action Points

Members noted the status of the action points.

Item 8 : GCSE English : The Director of Qualifications (DoQ) confirmed that a desk top exercise (across the 3 Awarding Bodies) on the assessment structure of the GCSE English specification had been completed to ensure that CCEA's specification was user friendly. A comprehensive support package has been developed and proposals are being drafted on how CCEA can provide these to schools in a meaningful way.

As 2012 was the first subject award for the new specification she suggested that time is allowed for this to bed in, review any issues arising from the 2013 summer series and should there be any dissatisfaction an independent analysis across the 4 awarding bodies will be requested.

Members were encouraged by an additional 1144 entries for 2013 examinations and agreed that this be reviewed following the summer series.

Record of Council Induction : 26 February 2013

Members noted the record of the Council Induction meeting which took place on 26 February 2013.

4 Correspondence

Members noted the correspondence in relation to :

- *Access to Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE) Services; (ltr from R Hanna to D Hughes 5 December 2012) and response from D Hughes of 9 January 2013).*
- *Appointment of D Baker as additional Deputy Secretary (DE); (ltr from P Sweeney to R Hanna 19 December 2012).*

- *Commissioning Review of Technical Issues Associated with CBA; (ltr from D Hughes to R Hanna 16 January) and response from R Hanna 8 March 2013).*

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that an extension had been sought to facilitate the inclusion of the Independent Audit carried out by ASM.

The DoCS advised that he had received a verbal update from the Senior Auditor (ASM). He reported no significant issues around the way in which the project had been managed and confirmed that the recording keeping and knowledge of the staff has been classed as exemplary. The draft report is expected by 22 March. It was hoped to issue the final report to DE by 29 March 2013.

- *Corporate and Business Planning Arrangements; (ltr from K Godfrey to R Hanna 29 January 2013).*
- *Future Delivery of Procurement Services in the Education Sector; (ltr from P Sweeney to R Hanna 1 February 2013).*
- *Ofqual policy steer letter : reforming Key Stage 4 Qualifications; (ltr from M Gove to G Stacey 6 February and G Stacey's response 6 February 2013).*
- *Vacancy Control Policy Application to CCEA; (ltr from D Baker to R Hanna 26 February 2013).*
- *Recruitment of Chief Executive for CCEA; (ltr from D Hughes to T Carson 25 February 2013).*
- *2013-14 Capital Budget Allocation; (ltr from D Heaney to R Hanna 7 March 2013).*
- *Response to CCEA's First Interim Report – Review of GCSE and A Levels; (ltr from D Hughes to R Hanna 7 March 2013)*

5 Governance and Accountability

Accountability Review Meeting : 6 December 2012

The minutes of the Accountability Review meeting held on 6 December 2012 were provided for members' information.

The next meeting would take place on **Tuesday 30 April 2013 at 10.00 am.**

Draft Committee Terms of Reference

C/105/1

The Interim Chief Executive advised that minor changes to the existing Terms of Reference had been made to ensure consistency. He confirmed there were no substantive changes.

A Council member asked for the following change to be made to Point 2 : Membership of the Finance and Education Committees :

2.1 *The Committee **will be made up** (in place of 'comprise')of Council Members.*

Final versions would come forward to the next appropriate meeting for ratification.

6 Finance & Planning

Finance Committee Report : 30 January 2013

The final minutes were tabled for members' information. The Interim Chief Executive reported on the following :

- Finance Report as at 31 December 2012. An overall underspend of £413K was reported. Plans have been put in place to address the underspend. It was confirmed that significant progress had been made to bring the budget within the 1% target set by DE.
- Smoke Extraction System. Members were advised that despite approval being given by DE in November 2012 for £90K, there was insufficient time to procure and fit a bespoke system for CCEA by the end of this financial year. This funding will have to be bid for in the new year.
- Draft Budget 2013/14. A draft budget for 2013/14 had been submitted to DE on 3 December 2012.
- Procurement Update. At the request of the Finance Committee, the Interim Chief Executive wrote to DE outlining the challenges CCEA had been experience in procuring CoPE services. Following clarification to CPD that CCEA were named on a SLA between DE and DfP significant progress has now been made in securing these services.
- Business Cases : the Draft Qualifications Technology Roadmap Business case was approved by the Committee.
- Outgoing Council Members. The committee paid tribute to two members of Council who had served their maximum term : Jim Collins and Patricia O'Farrell.

Finance Report as at 28 February 2013

C/105/2

The FM drew attention to paper ***C/105/2*** and reported an overall underspend of £388K at this time. This includes the January monitoring round of bids and easements. The main areas of underspend were:

- Staffing (£139K)
- Teacher Costs (£115K)
- Teacher Release (£174K)
- Print (£107K)

The FM confirmed that discussion had taken place with managers and detailed plans are underway to bring the underspend back within the 1% target.

Clarification was sought on the teacher release underspend. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that forecasting teacher release costs continued to be challenging as CCEA had no control over the uptake, he also advised on the impact of industrial action on teacher participation in training for the new assessment arrangements.

He advised that CCEA had co-ordinated with schools within specific areas to facilitate training around assessment. These were closure days and no teacher release required. This was successful and well received by the teachers.

Members recognised the challenges and were content that this was being monitored closely going forward.

January Monitoring Round

Members noted approval for the January monitoring round net release of £535K was received on 21 February.

Statement of Financial Position as at 28 February 2013

C/105/3

Members noted the information provided.

CCEA Draft Corporate Plan 2013-15

C/105/4

The Chairman confirmed this working draft had been issued to DE for comment. A further draft (including feedback from DE) would be discussed by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 1 May.

The DoCS gave some background to the process of developing the corporate plan. He advised that CCEA operated on a rolling basis which was reviewed annually through the appropriate governance processes. This was suspended in 2008/09 as CCEA was to be incorporated into ESA. Now that CCEA is a stand-alone organisation, the process has been reinstated.

The draft document has been developed to reflect the Programme for Government(PfG) targets and DE's overarching priorities identified in the DE Corporate Plan 2013-15.

The Interim Chief Executive commended the DoQ for the work carried out to date. He confirmed all staff had the opportunity of being involved in planning and development of the draft plan; and that comments from Council would be taken into consideration.

Members commended the approach to the document and detail provided. The following comments were made:

- References to learners be made more explicit throughout the document particularly in the strategic goals;
- Mitigation measures and controls be included around 3rd party providers.
- Page 9, paragraph 1 wording to be revised.
- Page 12 : an alternative to 'take forward' be agreed.
- Page 13 : '*CCEA will deliver products and services that meet and aim to exceed customers and stakeholders expectations*' be changed to : '*CCEA will deliver products and services that meet customers and stakeholders expectations*'.
- Page 17 : 2.3 : Milestones to be raised from 50% reduction in reports on non-compliance to 75% reduction.

Concern was expressed about reference to 100/% error free. Following discussion members recognised that DE would not accept anything less than 100% and agreed that CCEA should continue to aspire to this.

The DoCS confirmed that all comments would be taken into consideration.

The Chairman thanked members for their contributions.

7 Audit

Approval of Gifts and Hospitality Register

C/105/5

The DoCS advised that as a result of a recent audit it was recommended that the register be approved by Council and signed off by the Chief Executive and Chairman.

He advised that a clear policy for staff was in place and all gifts are declared on a Register which is kept in the Chief Executive's Office.

It was agreed that the policy be amended to include Council members.

Clarification was sought on the acceptance of one gift. It was confirmed that the policy was in line with DE's policy and the gift was allowed. It was agreed that staff would be reminded of the policy and Council's role in reviewing and approving same.

Subject to the inclusion of Council members, the policy was **approved** by Council.

8 Education

Education Committee Report : 20 February 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2013 were provided for members' information.

The Interim Chair reported on :

- SEN Qualifications Development Project :members were updated on the outcomes of the first year of a 2-year development project.. The final report will be discussed at the autumn meeting.
- Entitlement Framework :specifications for accreditation on 28 February 2013 were on target. The Committee felt that a wider understanding of training needed to deliver the new qualifications was required and this will be taken forward with the Management Board.

Updates were also received on Occupational Studies; Entry Level Units for SEN and End of Key Stage Assessments.

The Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications; and Computer Based Assessment were on the agenda for this meeting.

The Interim Chair paid tribute to the professional contributions from the co-opted members and welcomed Dr Cunningham to the Council.

CCEA Review of Computer Based Assessment

C/105/6

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that DE commissioned a four-part review following technical difficulties with computer-based assessments in the Autumn of 2012. This includes a review by CCEA of the operation of assessments, the problems reported and how they will be addressed.

The Business Manager, Education Strategy, gave an overview of the technical issues, the four-part review, the risks remaining and mitigation.

It was confirmed that there was now a significant lack of confidence in terms of usability and interpretation of outcomes and correctness of the assessments. This would have to be built up going forward.

Members **approved** the report.

General

Members expressed concern at the way in which CCEA has been implicated in the cause of the technical problems and asked that a strong position be taken to advise all stakeholders that this was not the case. The actions taken to rectify the problem by CCEA should also be highlighted. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed CCEA were responsible for the delivery of computer based schools in the Autumn term.

DE have also been informed that until the root cause has been identified, an absolute assurance of a re-occurrence cannot be given. It was noted that CCEA is not responsible for the ICT platform in schools. All risks have been highlighted and reflected in CCEA's risk register at the highest possible level.

Following discussion members suggested that it would be beneficial for the Chairman to write to the Permanent Secretary (as soon as possible) outlining the significant issues outside of CCEA's control and to seek a written assurance that assistance would be provided by DE to prevent a re-occurrence in the forthcoming Autumn term.

The Chairman confirmed that CBA had been discussed at his initial meeting with Permanent Secretary, and agreed to discuss a suitable way forward with the Interim Chief Executive.

9 Regulation

Draft Interim Report : Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications

C/105/7

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed the first report had been submitted to DE by 31 January 2013; and the second interim report was due with DE by 31 March 2013. He advised that the Expert Group had its first meeting on 26 February and would meet on a monthly basis until the end of the Review.

The Regulation & Accreditation Manager confirmed the project was on schedule.

He advised that the second interim report contained the qualitative analysis from the on-line questionnaire and summarised the key messages arising. This feedback was used to provide a basis for the face to face discussions with stakeholders which had taken place mid-March.

Phase 3 will be to develop detailed options/recommendations for improving, changing or replacing GCSEs and/or A Levels in Northern Ireland. He advised that a range of consultations would run from 5 April to 31 May to ensure maximum contributions from all stakeholders.

A Qualifications Symposium was being held on 2 May in partnership with QUB. It was confirmed that Council and Education Committee members would be invited to attend.

The Interim Chief Executive also advised CCEA staff would have an opportunity to contribute to the review and dedicated events had been organised for mid-April.

The Chairman confirmed a workshop for Council and Education Committee to discuss first draft proposals would take place on Wednesday 22 May 2013 at 12.30 pm. Formal notification would be issued following the meeting.

Members were satisfied with the detail provided and **approved** the interim report for submission to DE.

10 Accreditation

Proposed Work Programme for the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) ***C/105/8***

The Regulation & Accreditation Manager advised that CCEA had a statutory function to provide support, advice and guidance to DEL on all aspects of curriculum and qualification development. He outlined the process for the work undertaken by CCEA for DEL and confirmed that this draft work plan takes account of Government and DEL priorities for 2013/14.

The Chairman stated it was important to develop working streams with other organisations to promote the expertise available in CCEA.

Members were satisfied with the detail provided and **approved** the proposed work programme.

Changes to CCEA General Conditions of Recognition ***C/105/9***

The Regulation & Accreditation Manager drew attention to paper C/105/9 which provided background to CCEA's regulatory role and the General Conditions of Recognition.

Members were satisfied with the detail provided and **agreed** to the addition of the following conditions: A1.3 :Inactive Awarding Organisations; and G4.2 and G.4.3 : Maintaining Confidentiality of Assessment Materials.

11 Any Other Business

The Chairman encouraged members to attend the Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications Workshop on 22 May 2013.

He thanked members and officers for their contributions to the meeting.

12 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as **Wednesday 26 June 2013** at 10.00 am.

CHAIRMAN

DATE

