

## Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Minutes of the sixth-fourth meeting of Council held on Wednesday 21 June 2006 at 1000 hours in the Boardroom, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, CCEA, Clarendon Road, BELFAST.

**Present :**

Dr A Lennon (Chairman)	Mr D McKee
Miss M Crilly	Ms C McKinney
Mr M Brown	Mr M Bowen
Mr I McMorris	Mr N Downing
Mrs D Black	Mr M Lowe
Mr J Collins	Ms P O'Farrell
Mr D Thompson	Mr J Clarke
Mr J Wilkinson	Mrs H McClenaghan

Mrs M Cree, DEL Assessor  
Mrs L Finlay, DE Assessor

Mr G Boyd, Chief Executive  
Mr N Anderson, Director of Examination Operations  
Mr R Hanna, Business Manager, CEO  
Mr R McCune, Accreditation Manager  
Mr M Fegan, Finance Manager – Item 5 only  
Ms C Gallagher, Curriculum & Assessment Manager – Item 6 only  
Ms M Warren, Programme Manager, Curriculum – Item 6 only  
Mrs J Scharf, Principal Officer – Item 7 only

Miss N Kennedy, Manager, Council Secretariat

### 1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms M Watson; Professor P Roebuck and Mr D Woods.

### 2 Chairman's business

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, in particular Mrs Lorraine Finlay who was representing the Department of Education in place of David Woods.

He congratulated Mrs Helen McClenaghan and Ms Mae Watson on their recent honours of OBE and MBE respectively.

The following papers were tabled:

- Action sheet from Council meeting held on 3 May 2006 for at Item 3;
- Audit & Risk Committee minutes from meeting held on 14 June 2006 for Item 4; and
- 14-19 Research Report, for members' information

The following officers attended during the course of the meeting:

- Mr Richard Hanna and Mr Roger McCune – Item 3 onwards
- Mr Mark Fegan – Item 5
- Ms Carmel Gallagher and Mrs Marilyn Warren – Item 6
- Mrs Jenny Scharf – Item 7.

## **Election of Deputy Chair**

The Chairman sought members' views on how the process of electing a Deputy Chair could be conducted. Members agreed on an 'open election' process. The following members were proposed:

Professor Peter Roebuck was proposed (via e-mail) by Ms Mae Watson and seconded by Mr Michael Lowe.

Mr David McKee was proposed by Mr Martin Bowen and seconded by Ms Carmel McKinney.

Mr Martin Bowen was proposed by Mr Jim Collins and seconded by Mr David McKee.

Mr David McKee was elected Deputy Chair.

## **Recruitment Process**

### *Director of Corporate Services*

The Chairman reported that the successful candidate declined the offer. No reserve candidate was identified.

The Chairman and Chief Executive have agreed that, given the timeframe, the post will not be filled, but management responsibilities will be reorganised internally to ensure all units within Corporate Services are managed competently.

Mr McKee sought an assurance that the Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, was content that Corporate Services could be internally restructured. The Chief Executive assured members that he was comfortable with the management capabilities of the senior managers within Corporate Services but recognised that there was an issue regarding the strength of the top tier of management which needed to be addressed.

The Chairman and Chief Executive assured members that they would continue to ensure that risks within Corporate Services were closely managed in the interim.

### *Director of Education Policy*

The appointments process for this post has been halted due to an objection raised by an internal candidate. An independent panel comprising Mr Collins and Ms Watson has been appointed to carry out an investigation into the complaint. Members will be kept fully informed.

Mr Clarke sought clarification on the procedure used to recruit senior staff to this post given the inability to fill the post for some time. The Chairman assured members that the processes used are best practice and appointments at this level required DE approval (provided a 2 year contract was offered). However the quality of external applications remained disappointing. This was undoubtedly influenced by the level of salary offered and the uncertainty pending RPA.

Mr Wilkinson sought an assurance that education policy would continue to be directed with the same level of commitment over the next two years and clarification on who would be shaping policy going forward. The Chairman clarified that policy would continue to be shaped by the Council.

He expressed concern that both posts had not been filled but assured members that policy would continue to be driven forward by himself and the Chief Executive in the interim.

No firm timescale had been set to resume the appointments process for the Director of Education Policy.

### **Agenda Forming**

The Chairman invited members of Council to suggest agenda items for either Council or its sub-committees. The Chief Executive agreed to facilitate this and members were asked to put forward items to Miss Kennedy in the first instance.

The Chairman welcomed Mr McCune and Mr Hanna to the meeting.

### **3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 3 May 2006**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2006 were approved and a copy signed by the Chairman.

#### *Action points*

The Chief Executive reported on the following :

*Item 2 : membership of regulation & qualifications committee* : membership is now balanced. The Chief Executive thanked members for their support.

*Item 3 : project manager to PMB* : Mr Paddy Mackey has been appointed Regional Co-ordinator to PMB.

Mrs McClenaghan wished to place on record her thanks to the Chairman and Chief Executive for bringing this issue to the attention of the Department of Education, and to Mr David Woods for making this a priority. She said the Boards have made this a priority and structures are being put in place to ensure issues will be dealt with and support will be given as required.

Mr McKee and Mr Bowen sought clarification on the following :

- Has Mr Mackey replaced Mr Irwin as co-chair of PMB; and
- Does Mr Mackey also retain the joint function in the ELBS?

Mrs McClenaghan confirmed that Mr Mackey had replaced Mr Irwin as co-chair and reported that he would lead the support structure which will be put in place with other boards and senior personnel. This will give a clearer focus that what existed previously.

The Chairman and members, whilst recognising efforts on moving this situation forward, expressed discomfort with the breadth of Mr Mackey's responsibilities and the workload. Mr Clarke stated the need for a co-ordinated approach amongst all boards and senior personnel and appropriate resources to be put in place. Mr Bowen stated that he did not doubt Mr Mackey's capability.

*Item 4 : e-learning* : all e-learning activities have been mainstreamed and will come through the sub-committees and then to Council as appropriate. A presentation on the outcomes of the pilot work will take place at a future meeting.

The Chief Executive stated that we will ensure technology will be used in the review of specifications. This will be reviewed by the Regulation & Qualifications Committee and come forward to Council for sign-off as appropriate.

All other action points had been dealt with or were on the agenda for discussion.

#### **4 Committees**

##### *(a) Learning for Life and Work sub-committee : 17 May 2006*

The Chairman informed members that discussions took place on :

- Ensuring that the Review of GCSEs was relevant to the world of work.
- Pilot Specification for GCSE Engineering: use of IT has been included and work continues on the content which will reflect how education is changing in work-focussed courses.
- Futuresearch: two day residential was held to consider the current careers provision. Members of the committee will take various aspects of the work forward and report back at regular intervals.

The Chairman reported that he had written to the Permanent Secretary of the subject of careers guidance. A meeting has been arranged between CCEA, DE and DEL for August to take this forward.

##### *(b) Curriculum and Assessment Committee : 24 May 2006*

In the absence of Ms Watson, Chair of the Committee, the Chief Executive reported on the following :

*Item 6 : proposals for future alignment of the primary record of achievement with primary pupil profile.*

The committee considered recommendations for the primary record of achievement to transfer into part of the pupil profile. This policy issue will now be discussed by the Department of Education and further work will be required going forward both in terms of content and legislation.

Mr Thompson asked if this will apply to secondary records of achievement. The Chief Executive confirmed that this would be considered. The post primary progress file would be more extensive, covering many aspects of the curriculum and would require significant alignment.

It is intended to bring forward extended proposals for assessment at Key Stage 3 and the possibility of proposing accreditation of the Progress File. This will be debated fully at future committee and council meetings.

*Item 9 : early years' enriched curriculum evaluation : summary of Year 5 findings*

The committee received a summary of the findings of Year 5 of the Enriched Curriculum evaluation. Although not yet finalised, the report had been subject to comments in the media. The Chief Executive agreed that the final report would go forward to the curriculum and assessment committee and Council for discussion later in the year.

The Chairman asked for sight of the report as a matter of urgency.

Mr Downing stated the need for the report to go through Council as soon as possible, to enable CCEA to provide positive results and findings to the public and media. The Chairman and Chief Executive agreed to take this forward.

The Chairman assured members that there was a good deal of support in the system for the Enriched Curriculum initiative and agreed to circulate a letter outlining advice the Council sent to the Department of 3 May 2005.

Mr McKee wished to place on record his congratulations to the Chief Executive for the way in which he conducted himself in response to criticisms from Mr McCartney. The response was robust and backed up by positive comments from those principals interviewed who had piloted the Enriched Curriculum.

The Chief Executive said he would seek permission from the Chief Inspector to circulate a letter she had written supporting the Enriched Curriculum initiative to Council.

*Item 10 : evaluation of local and global citizenship at KS3 : interim report*

The committee received the interim report on the evaluation of local and global citizenship at Key Stage 3.

The Chairman said the report was difficult to read, there was no executive summary and not enough hard data and suggested it be redrafted. He asked that the report be revisited with the University of Ulster.

*(c) Regulation, Qualifications & Lifelong Learning Committee : 31 May 2006*

In the absence of Professor Roebuck, Chairman of the Committee, Mr McCune reported that this was the first meeting of the newly reconstituted committee and members received an induction and an overview of the work of the committee and the regulatory functions of CCEA.

Mr Hamilton explained the functions undertaken by the Business Assurance unit in relation to the regulatory evaluation of CCEA's examinations operations and the process for the development of the action plans and the categorisation of the recommendations made by QCA within the scrutiny reports.

Members were updated on two aspects of the Review of Specifications:

- Regulation and accreditation

A report on the outcomes of the consultation seminars on the Burden of Assessment; Stretch and Challenge and Coursework was received. Work continues in these areas which will inform the content of the new specifications.

- Project Report

A brief overview was given on the timescales and the work required in the development of the new specifications for GCE. A more detailed proposal would be brought back to the next meeting.

The Chairman sought clarification on the significant non-compliances in respect of the code of practice with regard to Spanish and Tourism. Mr McCune assured members that audit procedures were used to classify the recommendations. CCEA have no major concerns. The scrutiny reports were mainly positive.

The Chairman asked for a report on the general position on scrutiny reports for all awarding bodies and information provided on the categories CCEA sit in.

It was agreed that a scrutiny overview including the level of recommendations take place and be reported back through the Regulation, Qualifications and Lifelong Learning Committee.

Mr Clarke and Mr Bowen, new members to the committee, wished to place on record how impressed they were with the processes and procedures put in place for self-assessment and the action plans following the recommendations from the scrutiny reports.

Mrs Cree expressed concern regarding the low representation from the FE Sector. The Chairman confirmed that representations have been made to the FE sector to service on this committee.

*(d) Business Committee : 14 June 2006*

The Chairman informed members that the draft minutes had not yet been approved.

He reported that:

- Accounts 2005/2006 – External auditors have completed the process and have raised issues some issues regarding income and expenditure. It is hoped that the accounts will be signed off by the Business Committee at its next meeting in October.
- 2004/2005 Accounts would be laid before Parliament on 5 July and available on the CCEA website thereafter.
- Financial position at end of May was discussed in detail. Figures showed an underspend of £403K due to project plans not being finalised and phasing of budgets. There were no issues of concern to report in any other activities at this time.
- Business development - a series of presentations were given on the GCE and GCSE entries for summer 2006.
- Modernisation : an update was given on the developments in examinations modernisation and convergence.
- Business Assurance – the site visit is due to take place between 3-7 July. The Chief Executive met with the assessors early in June and is confident that CCEA have moved forward in a number of the areas identified for improvement in the feedback report received in 2005.
- IS Department – a report was given on the achievements of the IS department and how they have deployed the business excellence model as a tool for improving their services. IS has achieved accreditation in both Tick IT and ISO 27001 Quality Marks.

*(e) Audit and Risk Committee : 14 June 2006*

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2006 were tabled for members' information.

Mr Collins, Chairman of the Committee, said the committee had discussed and agreed the committee's terms of reference and reported on the following:

- Non-compliance with CCEA's purchasing policy: 13 invoices with non-authorized purchase orders had been received over £1,000 totally £38,000. The committee agreed procedures should be reviewed.
- Risk Management activity February – May 06: the committee received an overview of CCEA's risk management arrangements and a presentation on the Assessment of the Effectiveness of Risk Management.
- Examinations and assessment administration risks is a standing item on the agenda. Mr Quinn highlighted the areas of concern to the committee and issues on the manageability of increased entries disaster recovery mechanisms were discussed.
- NIAO was issued a critical report in March on the DE literacy and numeracy schools strategy.

Updates were received on the internal audit annual assurance statement and CCEA's annual report on the assurance framework and statement of internal control.

## **5 Finance**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Fegan to the meeting. He reminded members that the business committee had discussed the finances in detail at its meeting on 14 June.

Mr Fegan reported a £403K underspend due to project plans not being finalised. A slight overspend was reported on capital and baseline due to tighter controls and phasing issues.

Earned income is on target and authorised grant funding is underspent as full grant has not yet been drawn down.

Expenditure : Facilities Management and Finance are £54k overspent due to incurring a one-off postage cost of £20K for a mail shot to heads of department in all post-primary schools for the review of specifications. Removal and renovation costs were also incurred as Finance and PSE departments moved from Clarendon to William Ritchie building.

Capital : all capital requirements over the next 3 to 5 years were to be identified and discussed with the Department.

The Chairman sought clarification on the position of the Annual Accounts 2005/2006. Mr Fegan reported that it was hoped the accounts would be available for sign off and approval at the next Council meeting.

## **6 Curriculum and Assessment**

The Chairman welcomed Ms Gallagher, Mrs Scharf and Mrs Warren to the meeting.

*Pupil profile update*

*C/63/2*

Mrs Warren drew members' attention to the information in the paper. She reported that the trials for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupil profile were underway with 180 teachers and 90 schools. Members were updated on the following:

- Focus group meetings were underway.
- Parent focus groups were scheduled to take place week beginning 26 June.

- BDO Stoy Hayward had been awarded the external evaluation on the outcomes of the trials.
- Meetings with principals have taken place and issues outlined in the paper.
- Evaluations on CAPITA report writer will take place on 3 and 4 July and training will be conducted by C2K.
- Evaluations of maths assessment tools are also taking place and the procurement for diagnostic assessment will take place in August.

Mr Wilkinson sought clarification on the critical dates for implementation. This was confirmed as September 2007. The Chief Executive confirmed that in the interim large scale school trials would take place around manageability to ensure challenges and problems can be identified as soon as possible. It is hoped that by September 2006 as many schools as possible will be involved in the trial.

The Chairman asked if there had been any feedback to date regarding parental involvement. Mrs Warren said this would be reported back in the evaluation report which was due for completion by 28 July.

The Chairman sought an assurance that progress would continue to be made over the summer period. Mrs Warren confirmed that mechanisms had been put in place to continue to work to the deadlines and report back to Council at its October meeting.

Mr Wilkinson asked if post-primary schools could be brought up to date on where primary schools are with curriculum delivery. Mrs Warren confirmed that awareness raising and link sessions would take place in early 2007 for training on specific issues.

The Chief Executive reported that an internal pupil profile management board had been set up, chaired by him, to ensure that all of the issues are dealt with and managed directly.

Concern was expressed about C2K involvement and that a number of schools are not happy with the way things are happening with C2K. It was reported that development work has been ongoing using the CARN report writer. C2K have also facilitated work with INCAS outside of the managed service. This has now changed as DE have asked C2K to procure the INCAS application. Members were assured that CCEA would express their concerns to C2K as strongly as possible.

It was confirmed that clear instructions have been issued to C2K from DE. Concern was expressed about the manageability and scale of the operation, including the time it will take for students to take the test and the impact this will have on the classroom. It was reported that at the C2K project board meeting, ETI expressed concern regarding the length of time it took to do the test and the practicality issues around this.

The Chief Executive expressed the importance of ensuring that as many schools as possible take part in the trial to enable CCEA to get a true picture of all of the manageability and practical issues.

The issue of training time for teachers for both primary and post-primary should be taken into consideration.

Concern was expressed about the lack of C2K machines in primary schools, 1 machine in each classroom would contribute to the manageability problems.

There was a need for clear communication on the pupil profile and a publication along the same lines as the Pathways 2 document was suggested.

The Chief Executive agreed to discuss this with DE.



The Chairman reported that he and the Chief Executive had met with the Minister regarding the Pupil Profile. It was suggested that there may be a need to be prepared for selection being maintained and a suitable tool found other than the 11+. He assured members that he made it clear to the Minister that the Pupil Profile could not be used for selection purposes.

The Chief Executive was asked to make a representation to the Department regarding the additional work that may need to be undertaken now should selection be retained.

The Chief Executive agreed that this would be taken forward as soon as possible.

*Curriculum Implementation Update (PMB)*

*C/63/3*

Ms Gallagher spoke to the paper. She reported that Mr Paddy Mackey had replaced Mr Irwin as Co-Chair of the PMB and was responsible for ensuring the co-ordination of the implementation plan.

CCEA's main priority is to ensure the support materials are in schools on time and it is intended to produce a 'box' of support materials to allow schools to do their own in-service training. It is hoped that this resource will be ready for January 2007.

It was confirmed that the communications group had met with DE to ensure a positive and joined up message is conveyed to schools and all stakeholders.

Clarification was sought on whether the representation on PMB was being extended and what interest groups the new members were from. It was confirmed that 5 primary and 5 post primary principals have been nominated and also 5 union representatives.

**7 14-19**

*Stretch and Challenge at GCE*

*C/63/4*

Mr McCune spoke to the paper. He informed members that the DfES 14-19 White Paper had indicated that GCE qualifications were to be 'strengthened' in order that the brightest students would be challenged. It is intended that the new GCE subject criteria (to be finalised in October/November 2006) will include how the 'stretch and challenge' was to be achieved within revised specifications. Officers have been engaging with their counterparts at QCA and DELLS on development work relating to how 'harder' questions should be introduced within GCEs. This was an appropriate time to seek the Council's views on the direction to be taken.

During general discussions the following views were expressed:

- Evidence of greater depth of study within a subject should not be the only element of challenge in sixth form study; challenge could also be introduced by increasing the breath of study.
- While there was a recognition that some universities needed greater discrimination in A level results, GCE study should not be dominated by this requirement.
- There was a need to look at different methods that could be used within question papers to introduce challenge. This development work needed to take place before decisions were finalised.

In the light of the discussion, it was agreed that officers should take account of the following points when agreeing a way forward with QCA/DELLS:

- CCEA GCE specifications need to maintain parity with English/Welsh A/As levels.
- The introduction of an A\* at 'A' level (or AS level) should be determined statistically as was already the practice with GCSEs.
- There should not be 'harder' sections added to question papers – the Regulatory Authorities should look at ways of introducing more challenging elements within questions.
- Any changes introduced need to be carefully monitored.

It was agreed that members would be up-dated on progress at the next meeting of Council.

*Proposals for changes to GCSE coursework arrangements*

*C/63/5*

Mr McCune reported that the regulators have produced guidance for teachers on ensuring that GCE/GCSE coursework is the candidates' own work. Copies of the guidance would be sent to centres in Northern Ireland in September.

He reported that the regulatory authorities had undertaken a review of GCSE coursework in terms of consistency of approach across subjects, fairness and cumulative burden. He drew members' attention to the proposals for change.

Following discussion, members raised the following points.

The need to ensure that:

- subjects that do not have coursework do not become academic and have no context;
- mathematics be looked at in the full context to obtain a greater understanding how it can be applied in real life and ensure it does not regress;
- rigour and relevance for all subjects;
- all teaching of subjects is contextualised;
- gender be taken into consideration when looking at coursework issues;
- coursework is relevant and it is authenticated particularly in art and design and technology and design;
- plagiarism is addressed.

The Chairman asked for consideration to be given to the use of technology for coursework in some subjects, ensuring the appropriate rigour and relevance.

It was confirmed that more controlled conditions are being explored to ensure authenticity of coursework.

It was confirmed that there were many opportunities for technology to provide students to use application tests where they can demonstrate their skills in ICT and a range of subjects. It was agreed that more imaginative on-line assessment would be considered whilst still maintaining rigour and relevance to subjects.

The Chairman agreed that work continue in this area with the appropriate committee and urged caution regarding the rigour and relevance and mathematics.

**8 Any other business**

The Chairman wished to place on record his thanks to Mr Dan McCall for all of his contributions during his time on the Council and wished him well in his retirement.

He drew members' attention to two events that would normally take place during the year. He suggested that due to the enormous workload and deadlines to be met around Pupil Profile, Review of Specifications and the new curriculum, that he wished to cancel this year's Education Conference and postpone the joint NCCA/CCEA Conference.

Mr McKee asked that the joint conference be re-arranged for later in 2007. It was agreed that a date would be discussed with NCCA and members notified in due course.

The Chairman wished members well for the summer break and thanked them for their contributions during the meeting.

**9 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting was confirmed for Thursday 28 September 2006.

The Chairman asked that a revised schedule of meetings be issued to members following the meeting.

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE