

COUNCIL

Minutes of the one hundred and twenty-fifth meeting of Council held on Wednesday 21 June 2017 at 10.00 am in Room 115, 1st Floor, CCEA HQ, 29 Clarendon Road, Belfast, BT1 3BG.

Present:

Mr T Carson (Chair)	Mrs C Harpur
Mr C McKinney	Mr R Thompson
Dr L Caul	Mr B Wilson
Mr T Armstrong	Dr A Kerr
Dr N Morton	Mrs A Whiteside
Mrs C Fitzsimons	

Mr J Edwards (Chief Executive)
Mr R Hanna (Director of Education Strategy)
Mrs S McClelland (Interim Director of Corporate Services)
Mr J Daly (Financial Services Manager)

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

Introduction

The Chair welcomed members and advised that a closed session would take place before the start of normal business.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs R Cowan and Mrs K O'Hare.

2 Declaration of Interests

Members confirmed that there were no conflicts of interests on any of the agenda items.

3 Chair's Business

Appointment of 2nd Tier Directors

This item was discussed in the closed session of Council.

Ratification of Director of Finance & Corporate Services

Members formally ratified the appointment of Mrs Leah Scott as Director of Finance & Corporate Services. A start date will be discussed between the Chief Executive and Mrs Scott.

City of Wolverhampton Council Visit

The Chair advised that 3 representatives from the Headstart Programme, City of Wolverhampton Council had been invited to the meeting and would provide an overview of the initiative at the end of the meeting.

Chair's Report to Council

The Chair provided an overview on a range of activities undertaken since the last Council meeting. This included the recruitment process for the Directors' posts. He wished to place on record his thanks to the members of the panels who took forward the processes to conclusion, on both cases.

Meetings with the Chief Executive : He advised that meetings with the Chief Executive continued (on a fortnightly basis) to monitor effectiveness and seek assurances on the operations of the organisation.

He confirmed that Council Appraisals for the 2016/17 year had been completed and thanked members for their contributions to the process.

The Chair advised that previously notified Any Other Business would be discussed at this point on the Agenda

13 Any Other Business

The Chair thanked Dr Kerr for submitting the following items for discussion :

- Emolument for Council Members
- Format of Meetings
- Council Objectives
- The future of Curriculum development

Emolument for Council Members

The Chair suggested that he write to the Department of Education (DE) to seek their view. The letter would be circulated to members for information and would include reference to the ministerial appointments and the significant level of responsibility placed upon Council members.

Dr Kerr, whilst acknowledging that the appointments were voluntary, advised of other Arms-Length Bodies that were now remunerated. She said she would be willing to provide evidence of the significant work required by members and asked the Chair to make DE aware that the responsibilities are 3 dimensional :

- preparation in advance of meetings;
- attendance, participation; and
- follow up.

Members were content for the Chair to write to the Department of Education on this matter.

Format of Meetings

Dr Kerr suggested that in order for the Council to be most effective members should have an opportunity to have private discussion in advance of each Council meeting.

A Council Member endorsed this. Concern was also expressed that there was a risk that co-opted members would express views related to their normal line of business, rather than the business of CCEA.

The Chair reminded members that the guidelines under which the Council operates are within the Management Statement, however, he recognised the need to ensure the Council works effectively.

The Chair advised that due to time constraints on the agenda, the remaining items would be addressed at the August meeting of Council.

Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive drew attention to the detail of the report provided for members' information and gave an overview on the main areas contained within. He advised that he had resolved the issue with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) in that they have changed their policy. He confirmed that two new CCEA qualifications : Professional Services and Social and Health Sciences would now be forwarded to IUA for consideration.

Members welcomed this development.

A Council member sought clarification on the QUEST resource for SEN learners. It was agreed that this would be followed up outside of the meeting by Director of Education.

FOI Requests

Members noted the most recent FOI requests.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 March 2017

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 March 2017 were proposed by Dr Ana Kerr and seconded by Mr Robert Thompson as a true and accurate record. A copy was available for the Chair to sign.

Action Points

Members noted the status of the action points. The Chair confirmed that the Permanent Secretary had been invited to meet Council and has agreed to attend the 13 December 2017 meeting. Further details will be provided in due course.

The Chair would consider inviting DE Senior Officials to the Development Session scheduled for 12 October 2017.

5 Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence :

- CCEA 2016/17 Business & Financial Plans
- CCEA Non-Teaching 2016/17 Voluntary Exit/Redundancy Budget Allocation
- CCEA Corporate Risk Register 2017/18

- EU Working Group on Digital Skills and Competences : meeting in Belfast
- Change in DE Sponsorship Team
- CCEA Business Plan 2016/17 : End of Year Report
- CCEA 2017/18 Business Plan

A Council member wished to place on record congratulations to Mr Dale Heaney who had been appointed as Head of Targeting Educational Disadvantage (DE). The Chair said he would consider inviting Mr Heaney to a future Development Session as this area is of particular interest to Council.

6 Governance and Accountability

Minutes of Meeting held on 1 March 2017

The Chair advised that the minutes of the GAR meeting held on 1 March 2017 had been circulated to members for information. He provided a brief overview of the matters discussed.

Governance & Accountability Review Meeting : 27 June 2017

The Chair drew attention to the standard agenda and confirmed the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 27 June.

7 Finance

Finance Committee Report : 31 May 2017

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, Mr Robert Thompson, provided a report of the main items discussed at the meeting. The draft minutes were tabled for information.

He confirmed that members had fulfilled their scrutiny and challenge function on all agenda items and reported on the following :

- Digital Governance Project : members welcomed this development in that the digitisation of governance materials – to include Council and Committee papers, would enable members to work effectively in a secure environment. Training and support will be provided to members and a draft project plan would be provided to both Finance Committee and Council.
- Interim Finance Report as at 31 March 2017 : members noted an underspend of £31K (0.1%) on the recurrent budget and an underspend of 0.3% on capital expenditure. This was within the DE target of 1%.
- Interim Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2017 : members noted the information provided, in particular the increase in pension liability.
- 2017/18 Internal Budget Update : members welcomed the update and were content with the clarity of the information provided.
- Corporate Plan : Monitoring Report : members were content with the information provided.
- Draft CCEA Business Plan 2017/18 : members noted the operational planning cycle for the draft plan.

The above items were also on the agenda for this meeting.

- Procurement and Business Case Update : one live procurement with the Education Authority (EA) and one scheduled procurement with Central Procurement Directorate (CPD). There was no collaborative activity during this reporting period.

Members also received information on Intermediaries Legislation and the Public Sector Shared Services Programme for NDPBs and ALBs and noted the respective implications for CCEA.

Updates were provided on a range of activity within Human Resources. These included :

- Delivery of the People Strategy 2016/17 and plans for 2017/18
- Sickness Absence Report for 2016/17
- Performance Review System following the recommendations arising from the Internal Audit Review
- CCEA Policies and Strategies.

This concluded the report of the Finance Committee.

Interim Finance Report as at 31 March 2017

C/125/1

The Financial Services Manager (FM) drew attention to paper ***C/125/1***. Members noted the underspend of £31K (0.1%) and capital expenditure of 0.3% at this time. This was confirmed as within the DE target of 1%.

Finance Report as at 31 May 2017

C/125/1a

Members noted the detail of the information provided.

2017/18 Internal Budget Update

C/125/2

The FM drew attention to the detail provided at paper C/125/3. He advised that following a request from DE, CCEA had prepared for potential budget cuts of 2%, 4%, 6% and 10%.

He confirmed that the correspondence from the Finance Director (DE) of 15 March 2017 had previously been issued to members.

The Chief Executive confirmed that there was an arrangement for cash draw down and approval given until 31 July 2017. He also highlighted the risk of not having drawdown provision beyond 31 July 2017. The Chair agreed to raise the matter at the Governance and Accountability Review on 27 June.

Members welcomed the clarity of the information provided.

Close-out of Voluntary Exit Scheme 2016/17

C/125/3

The Chief Executive drew attention to the detail provided at paper C/125/3. He gave an overview of the process used for the Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) 2016/17. He confirmed that the scheme had closed with officers exiting the organisation from 31 March through to 30 September 2017.

Clarification was sought and received on a range of matters, and members were content with the explanations provided.

The Chief Executive advised that CCEA would not, under the present circumstances wish to utilise the PSTF (Public Sector Transformation Fund) for 2017/18 as a period of stability was required. However, if any budgetary settlement was less than favourable, then this decision may need to be revisited.

8 Planning and Performance

Corporate Plan 2016/17 : Monitoring Report

C/125/4

The Interim Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) drew attention to the information in paper FC/34/5 and reported on the final quarter for 2016/17. She advised that 65 out of 69 objectives were either achieved or substantially achieved; and reported on those likely to be achieved but with some delay and the one objective that would not be achieved during this reporting period.

She confirmed that 44 of the 47 DE targets had been achieved.

Members noted the information provided.

Draft CCEA Business Plan 2017/18

C/125/5

The DoCS advised that CCEA would report on 54 out of the 75 targets of the DE Business Plan. Organisational performance will be monitored against the DE objectives.

The document was provided as part of Item 5 : Correspondence.

Clarification was sought on whether the targets had been aligned to the Children and Young People's Strategy. The Chief Executive advised that the targets did dovetail to the youth training strategy. He highlighted that further work may be required at Level 2, in particular, to support the provision of professional and technical qualifications. He confirmed that a review would be carried out in this area.

The Chair of the Education Committee asked if Committee and Council members could be invited to the proposed External Conference (with international participation) planned for March 2018 (Business Plan ref 4.2(b)). He said it would be beneficial for members to engage with education professionals on a range of matters moving forwards.

Clarification was sought and received on a range of matters. Members were content with the explanations provided and commended the clarity of the document.

The Chief Executive advised that confirmation had not yet been received in regards to the Programme for Government (PfG) targets, however, CCEA would continue to monitor developments in this area.

9 Audit

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report : 12 April 2017

Dr Caul, Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee drew members' attention to the minutes provided and gave the following summary of the main items discussed.

- Risk Assurance in Awards and Purchases: December 2016 to February 2017 : one unauthorised purchase reported during this period and no areas of concern in respect of Direct Award Contracts.
- Corporate Risk Register 28 February 2017 : members were content with the information provided.
- Draft Annual Governance Statement 2016/17 : members were content with the information provided on the effectiveness of CCEA's governance arrangements.
- DAO Annual Fraud Report 2016/17 : members were content that no fraud had been identified during 2016/17 and were satisfied with the performance.
- Internal Audit Activity : Six reviews were presented to the committee for consideration.
- Annual Internal Audit Report year ended 31 March 2017 : members were content with the overall 'Satisfactory Assurance' rating given for 2016/17.
- Summer Examinations Series 2017 Risk Assurance Report : members noted that there were no high category risks or areas of concern to report at this time. The Chief Executive confirmed his availability throughout the summer series.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report : 14 June 2017

Dr Caul, Chair of the Committee, drew attention to the minutes circulated of the meeting held on 14 June 2017 and provided the following summary of the main items discussed.

- Risk Assurance in Awards and Purchases: March to May 2017 : two unauthorised purchases reported during this period. No areas of concern in respect of Direct Award Contracts.
- Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2016/17 (to include the NIAO Report to those Charged with Governance): members were content to recommend both documents to Council for consideration at this Council meeting.
- National Fraud Initiative : members noted this was a mandatory exercise for CCEA. No instances of fraud had been identified.
- Corporate Risk Register March 2017 : members were content with the information provided in the March register.
- Internal Audit Activity : Three reviews were presented to the committee for consideration. The Chair commended the professional manner in which Ms McDermott, Moore Stephens, presented the business to the committee.

New Format of Corporate Risk Register

The Chair advised that a new format of reporting risks was considered by the committee. He advised that this would include the introduction of root causes and consequences. There will also be a mechanism for reporting live risks to the committee. The Chair stressed the importance of this and asked the Chief Executive to review the format for reporting to ensure that the transition from old to new captured all relevant data.

This concluded the reports from the committee meetings. Members were content with the information provided.

Draft 2016/17 Annual Report and Accounts (and Report to those Charged with Governance)

C/125/6

The Chair of Council drew attention to the documents provided and confirmed that the Audit and Risk Committee members considered the documents in detail at its meeting on 14 June 2017.

The Financial Services Manager (FM) provided an overview of the main areas of the report and advised that the main concern was the increase in pension liability.

Members were content with the information provided and formally approved the draft for signature by the Chair and Chief Executive.

Subsequently the Chair and Chief Executive signed the reports in advance of submitting to the Department of Education.

10 Regulation

Regulatory Advisory Committee Meeting Report : 26 April 2017

The Chair of Council drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided. In the absence of the Chair of the Regulatory Advisory Committee, he gave a brief summary of the main items discussed at the meeting held on 26 April 2017. These included:

- Draft Regulation Strategy : members were content that the document would remain in draft until a Programme for Government had been agreed.
- Update on A/AS and GCSE Level developments across England, Wales and Northern Ireland: members received an update on the main changes across the jurisdictions and implications for Northern Ireland. The main concerns were the grade changes at GCSE and the open qualifications market operating in Northern Ireland.

Three presentations were provided to the committee on :

- Use of Comparable Outcomes and Prediction Statistics in GCSE and GCE A levels
- Supporting the New Grading System for revised GCSE qualifications
- Update on Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

The presentations stimulated good debate and members welcomed the opportunity to explore and gain a better understanding of these areas.

- Draft GCSE Grading Communicaitons Plan : following Council approval (March 2017), the plan was circulated to the committee for information.

A Council member suggested that consideration be given to condensing the detail of the document

Members were content with the information provided.

11 Education

Entry Patterns for Summer 2017

C/125/7

The Chair welcomed Ms Amanda Swann, Business Manager, Qualifications to the meeting.

The Chief Executive introduced this item.

The Business Manager, Qualifications, drew attention to the detail provided in paper C/125/7 and gave a detailed overview of the trends in entries for Summer 2017 and the contributing factors. She highlighted the variation to the entries for GCSE and GCE, and advised on the subject level changes and implications for CCEA.

She confirmed that a review of the market share would be conducted following the publication of the JCQ statistics at the end of August 2017.

Members sought information on potential route causes of the increase in entries. The Chief Executive advised that whilst more work was required, the main causes were likely to be policy changes and increasing confidence in CCEA qualifications.

Clarification was sought and received on a range of other matters and members were content with the explanations provided.

The Chair thanked the Business Manager, Qualifications for the informative briefing.

12 Visioning

The Chair advised that a session on Visioning would be included for the Development Session on 12 October 2017.

The Chief Executive provided a brief overview of the operations of the organisation in the context of the political, economic, social and technological environments.

He confirmed that the organisation continued to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, despite the financial challenges, and uncertainty without a Programme for Government. He advised that CCEA continued to promote and develop its digital services to centres, however, stressed the need for clarity and direction from the sponsoring body and government departments in respect of curriculum and qualifications to meet the needs of young people in Northern Ireland.

He advised that with the appointment of a Director of Finance and Corporate Services a high level of support would now be provided to him as Chief Executive and it was essential that a Director of Education was recruited as quickly as possible.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee commended the Chief Executive and his team for implementing the budget cuts to ensure the core business in maintained

14 HeadStart Programme

The Chair welcomed Tony O'Callaghan; Gavin Hawkins and Kevin Pace from the Headstart Programme, City of Wolverhampton Council. He advised that they had met with our colleagues in Education Strategy with a view to collaborating work and sharing of resources.

Mr O'Callaghan advised that the HeadStart programme in Wolverhampton is an integral and significant part of the city's growth. The mission is to promote, protect and preserve the mental wellbeing of 10-16 year olds across the city, by inspiring them to dream big, supporting them to maintain motivation and control and equipping them with the skills to cope with setbacks and adversity.

The delivery model is constructed across four strands:

1. City-wide mental wellbeing information and awareness raising
2. An area-based Universal offer
3. A universal plus offer for those in our specified age range
4. Targeted intervention for those most at risk

The programme will engage over 28,000 young people across five years.

Mr Hawkins and Mr Pace also provided an overview on the use of technology and the Test and Learn Programme.

Members were content with the information provided.

15 Schedule of Meetings 2017/18

The Chair drew attention to the schedule of Council meetings and Development Sessions from August 2017 to March 2018 and asked members to note the dates.

He confirmed that the next meeting of Council would take place on **Wednesday 30 August 2017** at 10 am.

He thanked members and officers for their input into the meeting.

Subsequently the date of the next meeting was changed to Wednesday 27 September 2017 at 10 am. Members were notified accordingly.

CHAIR

DATE

