

Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Council

Minutes of the fifty-fourth meeting of Council, held on Thursday 21 October 2004 at 11.00 am in the Armagh City Hotel.

Present

Dr A Lennon (Chairman)	Mr B Carlin
Mr J Clarke	Mr J Ellison
Mr B Turtle	Mrs D Black
Ms P O'Farrell	Mr D Thompson
Mr D McKee	

Mr D Woods, Assessor, Department of Education
Mr D McCall, Assessor, ETI

Mr G Boyd, Chief Executive
Dr A Walker, Head of Education Services
Mr D Mulholland, Head of Corporate Services

Ms C Gallagher, Item 5 only
Ms J Scharf, Item 6 only

Miss N Kennedy, Manager CE Office

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr A Murray; D W Mulryne; Mr J Lee; Mr J Collins; Ms M Watson; Ms J Bell; Mrs C Bell; Mrs M Cree; Mrs H McClenaghan and Professor P Roebuck.

2 Chairman's business

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and outlined the programme for the day. He reminded members' that Dr Walker's farewell dinner would be held that evening.

He reported that:

- The SCORE concert which took place on 15 October, was an excellent event. CD will be made and distributed to members' at the next meeting.

It was agreed that the date for next year's concert would be included in the Schedule of Meetings for 2005/06.

- Top Candidate event will be held on Tuesday 21 December, members will be issued with formal invitations in due course.
- Tomlinson report has been tabled for members' information.

Mr Carlin expressed concern at the conflicting statements in the press from CBI. He asked that this issue be considered and discussed fully going forward.

The Chairman assured members that Tomlinson relates to England only and not Northern Ireland. This will be discussed fully through the 14-19 Project and reported back to Council for further discussion and recommendations.

The Chairman asked that all press clippings related to Tomlinson be kept and contact be made with CBI to address their concerns and try to obtain hard data and case studies.

- This will be Dr Walker's last meeting. He retires after 29 years of service. The Chairman wished to place on record his thanks to Dr Walker for his enormous contribution to the work of the organisation and wished him well in his retirement.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 September 2004

With the addition of Mrs D Black to the list of the apologies, the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2004 were approved by Council and a copy signed by the Chairman.

Action points

The Chief Executive updated members on :

- Implementation Programme – Groups have been set up in conjunction with CASS Service, ELBs and other interested parties. First phase will comprise of awareness raising programmes which will commence early in the New Year.
- Key Stage 1,2 and 3 teams are currently producing plans which will go forward to Curriculum & Assessment Committee for ratification before coming to Council.

The Chief Executive said that some CASS members have expressed concern regarding budgetary pressure on the ELBs. The Department has been informed of this and we have been assured that the roll out and delivery of the new curriculum will be a priority.

- C2K – a letter and action plan for putting in place a new governance regime covering ICT in Education Service has been received from the Department of Education. CCEA have expressed concern regarding the lack of progress and the identification and appointment of the Programme Manager. A number of representations have been made to the Department and a meeting will take place with David Woods; Eugene Rooney and Richard Cushnie early next week to discuss the concerns further.

Mr Woods said the letter relates to the wider exercise on ICT governance. He assured members that the other issues regarding co-ordination and developmental work will be dealt with directly and more promptly than envisaged in the plan.

Mr Carlin sought assurance that all roles and responsibilities between CCEA and C2K were clear. The Chief Executive assured members that the relationship with C2K has been organised by a series of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and roles and responsibilities have been made absolutely clear.

- Modernisation Programme – good progress has been made since September. It is anticipated that all milestones and objectives will be met. Funding has been allocated for the programme. This will be put on the agenda for the meeting with the Permanent Secretary at the next Accountability Review Meeting.

4 Committees

(a) Learning for Life and Work Sub-Committee – 8 September 2004

The Chairman reported that the committee has been formed to think through and design the implementation in a practical and beneficial way for all learners of the whole area of Learning for Life and Work now that it has been placed at the core of the new curriculum.

The committee will be split into 4 groups to take forward work in the following areas:

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship;
- Careers planning;
- Engaging with the community; and
- Running school trials, testing and reporting back.

A Standing Consultative Forum will take place on 16 November 2004, this will be an opportunity to outline the work we are doing in this area, hear the views of stakeholders to ensure the widest possible buy-in from employers. Council members will be formally invited to participate.

(b) Regulation and Qualifications Committee – 22 September 2004

In the absence of Dr Mulryne, who chaired the meeting on 22 September, the Chief Executive informed members that the main item on the agenda was the development work of the 14-19 Project. This is a substantive item on today's agenda and will be discussed under Item 6.

A workshop was held on the Review of Vocational of Qualifications. No real progress has been made to date.

(c) Audit Committee – 14 October 2004

A copy of the minutes held on 14 October, were tabled for members' information. In the absence of Mr Collins, Mr Mulholland reported that the meeting focused on risk management. The following issues were discussed:

- Top level strategic risks and others throughout the organisation - progress was reviewed in terms of mitigation and feedback was taken on board by internal and external auditors. Auditors are satisfied with the work completed to date.
- Updates were given on new management framework for the internal audit function;
- Disaster recovery arrangements were noted and recommendations agreed.
- Effectiveness of the committee was discussed and a number of recommendations are under consideration.

- It was agreed that a synopsis of the raising awareness session on Internal Audit for Business Managers and Audit Committee be provided for Council.

Mr Carlin commended Mr Hamilton and Mrs Getgood on work carried out to date on risk management.

The Chief Executive reported that the NIAO was undertaking a VFM study on the promotion and improvement of Literacy and Numeracy in schools. The Chairman asked that CCEA liaise with the NIAO on this.

Members discussed Special Needs. The following issues were highlighted:

- Special needs are not being dealt with properly in normal school settings;
- Expert teacher training required;
- Funding for special needs units in schools is essential;
- Management and measuring success.

It was agreed that the issues raised needed to be debated and addressed in primary and post-primary schools.

(d) Curriculum & Assessment Committee – 27 September 2004

The Chief Executive, in the absence of Dr Mulryne, reported that work continued on the guidance and support materials for implementation of the new curriculum and draft implementation plans would be coming forward to the Curriculum & Assessment committee for approval before being submitted to Council.

An update on the literacy research would be given later on today's agenda and the workshop scheduled for the afternoon will be to discuss Assessment.

(e) Business Committee – 14 October 2004

Mr Ellison, in the absence of Dr Lennon, reported that:

- The ALTA Heads of Agreement document would be amended to take into account several legal clauses safeguarding CCEA's reputation and will be presented to the Committee for final endorsement at a future meeting;
- Draft accounts for 2003/2004 were discussed and will be amended to take into account issues raised by the committee;
- Budget – overall budget has been confirmed of £25M – discussions are ongoing with the Department for additional funding in terms of Curriculum Review.
- Finance report showed that the budget had been achieved for month end September.
- Updates were given on Futures Structures for Senior Management; the Diversity Agenda and Absence Management.
- Proposals for the risk response plan and the new risk register were agreed.

- A presentation was given on improving market share in Essential Skills and Vocational Qualifications.

5 Curriculum and Assessment

Literacy Review Update

C/54/1

The Chairman welcomed Ms Gallagher to the meeting. Ms Gallagher reported inconsistency and some difficulty in collating the data to inform the advice on the Enriched Curriculum

Mr Woods said that the Department require clear advice on the Enriched Curriculum before a decision could be made.

The Chairman stressed the importance of having sufficient, robust evidence to support the advice and sought assurance that every effort would be made to do so. The Chief Executive agreed that this would be taken on board.

6 Regulation and Qualifications

14-19 Project

C/54/2

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Scharf to the meeting. Mrs Scharf presented;

- The outcomes of the consultation;
- The scope of the project; and identified the particular needs for Northern Ireland in relation to Tomlinson.

The Chairman and members wished to place on record their thanks to Mrs Scharf for all her hard work in presenting complex information into a well-structured and clear overview. They welcomed the mapping across from the Tomlinson recommendations to what was happening in Northern Ireland.

The Chairman reminded members that the core of this work would be taken forward by the Regulations and Qualifications Committee and asked for feedback from the interviews with various stakeholders to ensure we are working in the right direction.

Mr Carlin observed that within the 14-19 exercise there were elements applicable to every stage of education. There is a distinction between core and main learning. He suggested the 2 sets of criteria be applied at every stage to help acquire appropriate breadth and preparation for the next stage. Appropriate testing should also be considered. The Chairman agreed that this would be taken on board.

Members raised the following concerns :

- The complexity of the report and the question of added value.
- The need for our proposals to be fair, transparent and easily understood by all stakeholders;
- Will the overarching qualifications add value on top of individual components;
- Comparability of qualifications to ensure wider currency;

- Use of the credit system;
- The use of ICT has not been addressed in Tomlinson – this should be at the centre going forward.

The Chief Executive reiterated that the Tomlinson proposals apply to England only, however, they do relate closely to our new curriculum. We are developing our own proposals in occupational studies. To ensure that we engage young people at all abilities we are providing well designed, interesting and relevant qualifications which will meet employer and pupil needs.

The full 14-19 paper will be discussed in detail at the next Council meeting.

A copy of Mrs Scharf's presentation has been attached to inform the minutes.

7 Finance

Finance report as at 30 September 2004

C/54/3

Mr Mulholland reported that budget had been achieved for September. A slight temporary overspend had been incurred in respect of the modernisation programme, implementation of the new curriculum and pupil profile, this will be addressed in bids for increased funding to the Department.

End of Year Accounts 2003/2004

Mr Mulholland reported that Business Committee had received the draft accounts for 2003/2004 and the memorandum of matters arising. Comments have been accepted and improvements have been put in place. Issues raised by Business Committee will be addressed and the accounts will be presented to Council for final sign-off at its February meeting.

8 Any other business

Mr Wood wished to place on record on behalf of his colleagues in the Department of Education their appreciation of the wisdom, experience and commitment of Dr Walker for all aspects of his work in CCEA.

The Chairman hoped that this gave Dr Walker a great deal of satisfaction in the progress CCEA has and paid tribute to the vital part he had in achieving this. Dr Walker thanked members for their kind words and said he was happy to be leaving CCEA with such optimism.

9 Date of next meeting

The Chairman informed members that the next meeting would be a full business meeting. It has been confirmed for **Wednesday 15 December** at an outside venue to be confirmed, followed by Christmas lunch.

CHAIRMAN

DATE