

4 Correspondence

The Interim Chief Executive drew members' attention to a number of pieces of correspondence in relation to the following issues:

- Errors in examination papers

CCEA issued a statement on the Further Mathematics and Business Studies. Centres were informed and they were content with CCEA's approach in dealing with the matters.

Whilst it was recognised CCEA had detailed mechanisms in place for checking examination papers, the Interim Chief Executive expressed his disappointment that these errors had occurred.

Further problems have been identified with English Awarding Bodies.

- NFER Report : investigating the relationship between A level results and prior attainment at GCSE.

The Interim Chief Executive advised that this was a complex issue which required thorough examination and debate. The work will be scoped and procurement issues identified.

The Vice-Chair said that a detailed piece of work will come forward to Council for consideration. She agreed it was important to consider the issues in the context of qualifications, school improvement, the revised curriculum and new assessment arrangements.

5 Governance and Accountability

Minutes of the Accountability Review Meeting : 21 April 2011

Members were advised that this was a productive and positive meeting. All issues were being progressed and will be brought forward to the next Accountability Review Meeting on 4 July 2011.

Procurement : Computer Based Assessment Tool

The Vice-Chair asked for an update on the procurement process for the Computer Based Assessment Tool. The DoES confirmed that significant progress had been made. The specification has been published in the European Journal and closing date is the beginning of July. The process is on target.

7 Finance and Planning

Finance Committee Report : 17 May 2011

The Chairman of the Committee drew members' attention to the detail of the minutes. He advised that the main items discussed were:

- *Finance position at year end.* The Baseline and Project budgets were achieved within 1.2% of the overall annual budget. The Capital budget came in on target.
- *Budget Allocation.*
- *Procurement:* a full update was given on all procurement issues. Those yet to be progressed would be pursued during the summer months.

In relation to the establishment of the DE CoPE, members expressed their disappointment that no further progress had been made.

- *Staff Survey:* a presentation was given on the feedback from the 2011 survey. Members were disappointed with the response rate and noted that an action plan would be drawn up to address the issues raised. The action plan had been issued to the committee.

Finance Report as at 31 March 2011

C/95/1

The FM drew members' attention to the detail provided in paper C/95/1. He advised that there may be minor changes as a result of responses from the Audit Office and PWC. However, the figures were accurate at this time.

He highlighted the main reasons for the underspends in projects and baseline, and confirmed that £1.3M net had been handed back to DE in-year.

A Council Member sought clarification on the reasons behind the underspend in projects. The Interim Chief Executive explained the difficulties in recruiting experienced practitioners due to uncertainties around job security. The DoES confirmed that five members of staff have returned to their permanent posts in school.

Following discussion, it was agreed that all possibilities would be explored to attract and recruit applicants.

Outline Work Programme 2011/12

It was confirmed that CCEA's outline work programme was circulated to stakeholders as required under legislation. No responses were received. The budget/work programme was being reviewed to reflect all DE requirements.

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that clearance had been received from DfP and DE on the outstanding issues around Directors' salaries.

8 Audit

Audit & Risk Committee Report : 11 May 2011

The Chairperson of the Committee drew members' attention to the minutes provided. She advised that the meeting had full attendance.

All actions from the previous meeting had been progressed and the Committee was content with the information provided.

The following updates were given :

- *Non-compliance*: this remains a standing item on the agenda. Members were satisfied with the low number of instances during the period February 2011 to March 2011.
- *DE Update*: the DE observer updated the committee on the internal audit for external events and associated hospitality. Members noted the detail and recommendations provided in paper **C/95/2** of the Council papers.
- *Internal Audits*: CCEA received an overall annual assurance rating of 'limited based on 6 audits.

The Committee expressed its disappointment in this rating and sought clarification from ASM on the reasons for this. Following discussion, a number of issues were clarified and members accepted the explanations.

The Vice-Chair of Council sought clarification on whether there would be any consequences for Council given the overall 'limited rating. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that the rating had been discussed in detail. He reminded Council that Management deliberately targeted these areas of concern. Whilst ASM recognised that some circumstances were outside CCEA's control, they have provided their professional opinion and it has been accepted. This would be reflected in the Statement of Internal Control and the Annual Report.

External Events and Associated Corporate Hospitality

Tabled

The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) reported that CCEA had received media attention due to concerns raised in relation to expenditure dating back to 2002/03 and issues of Corporate Governance. The tabled paper provided background to both issues.

He advised members that the information had originally been requested under FOI and subsequently put into the public domain. Interest continues and issues are being managed by TMT and relevant officers.

The Interim Chief Executive has been invited to give evidence at the Assembly Education Committee on 29 June 2011.

Members discussed and sought clarification on the issues raised. The Vice-Chair thanked the DoCS for updating members on the current situation. She was content that Council, DE and the Minister had been kept fully informed on all issues as they arose and asked that this continue in the weeks ahead.

She wished to place on record her regret at any embarrassment caused to the Minister or Permanent Secretary of the Department of Education.

DE Internal Audit Review of CCEA External Events and Associated Hospitality

C/95/1

Members noted the contents of and recommendations arising from the Internal Audit Report.

9 Education

Education Committee Report : 25 May 2011

The Chairperson drew members' attention to the detail of the minutes provided. Updates were given on the SEN Reference Group and Controlled Assessment.

The main issues discussed were :

- *Early Years Enriched Curriculum Project*: the key findings of the End of Phase 2 reports were discussed.

Following feedback from the workshop organised for primary practitioners, a paper would be prepared for consideration by Council.

- *Entitlement Framework*: the Committee received a detailed presentation and noted the information in the supporting paper.

Members commended the work completed to date. However, concern was expressed at the lack of progress made in preparing schools for implementation. The DoQ confirmed that qualifications development was well advanced and a conference would be held for principals in the autumn term to update them on the Entitlement Framework Portfolio.

The DE representative advised that progress has been slower in some areas than had been hoped. She confirmed the advice on definitions of 'applied' and 'general' qualifications had been reviewed and testing had taken place with a group of schools. She wished to place on record her thanks to Mr John Wilkinson for his involvement in this.

Members agreed it was very important to get the definitions of 'applied' qualifications right, particularly at age 14. The R&A Manager confirmed the meeting with DE had been very successful and improvements had been made to the Occupational Studies qualification to make the cohort more coherent and relevant.

The Vice-Chair asked that once the testing had been completed a paper be considered by the Education Committee before reporting to Council.

Areas of Advice

The DE representative asked members to consider any areas that they wish to contribute to. In particular, all aspects of the curriculum should continually be under review. She also asked for information beyond the specific role of the awarding organisation.

Members welcomed this and agreed that there was a need to focus on:

- progression from Key Stage 3 to 4;
- the curriculum at Key Stage 4;
- interface between Key Stage 4 and the Entitlement Framework.

It was agreed that this work be undertaken with a view to discussion at the committee and Council between now and December 2011.

The Vice-Chair wished to place on record her thanks to Mrs Katrina Godfrey, who was taking up a different post in DE, for all her contributions at Council.

Draft Advice : Development of Skills within 14-19 Education

C/95/3

The R&A Manager advised that the Draft Advice reflected discussion of the Education Committee at its meeting on 25 May 2011.

Members discussed and approved the recommendation, subject to the following :

- Development of phased arrangements to assess the relationship between levels of achievement at age 14 and grades achieved post-16 be put in place.
- The recommendation be changed to :
*'However, the skills qualification **could** (not should) be taken in parallel to GCSEs to support skills achievement'*.
- Guidance be produced for schools.
- The advice would reflect the context of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, the Skills focus in the Revised Curriculum and the introduction of the Levels of Progression in Communication and Using Mathematics.

The Interim Chief Executive stated that the recommendation would be entirely consistent with DE strategies and policies in this area and asked officers to take note of same.

CCEA Monitoring of Actions from OfQual Report

C/95/4

The DoQ advised that significant progress had been made on the implementation of recommendations arising from the OfQual Stage 1 and 2 investigations into the A2 Chemistry examination failure which occurred in August 2010.

Stage 1 : 27 (71%) actions have been completed with 11 (29%) to be completed after the awarding of grades. No actions are behind schedule.

Stage 2 : 20 (71.5%) actions have been completed. 3 (10.7%) are ongoing and 5 (17.8%) are behind schedule.

It was confirmed additional training sessions had been organised for the development of ISO procedures. User testing was underway.

Clarification was sought on the revision of procedures. The DoQ confirmed that the procedures would now reflect current practices and staff fully trained.

The Vice-Chair commended the DoQ for the detailed information provided.

Summer Examinations Series

C/95/5

The DoQ reported on two errors in live examination papers – GCE Further Mathematics and GCSE Business Studies. She confirmed that no candidate should be disadvantaged in any way.

Members discussed the issues in detail and were content with the immediate remedial action taken by the Interim Chief Executive and DoQ.

The Minister, Permanent Secretary and senior DE officials had been kept fully informed on the issues. The DE representative confirmed that the Minister met with the CCEA Regulator to gain a full understanding into the types of errors and the impact on pupils. She confirmed that this would be an item on the Ministerial agenda going forward.

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that reports would be provided to the Department on the issues discussed.

10 Regulation

Changes to the Regulation of Qualifications in Northern Ireland

C/95/6

The Regulation & Accreditation (R&A) Manager drew members' attention to the detail of paper C/95/6 in relation to the changes in the regulation of qualifications in Northern Ireland.

Members noted the implications for future regulatory activities and asked that an action plan be drawn up as a way of reporting progress to Council.

The R&A Manager agreed that further work was required on the implications, in particular, the way in which scrutinies are conducted. This would require careful discussion and an appropriate mechanism found.

The Vice-Chair suggested that progress against each bullet point in the paper be provided for the next Council meeting.

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that this would remain a standing item on the Council agenda.

11 Any Other Business

None identified.

13 Schedule of Meetings 2011/13

The Vice-Chair drew members' attention to the schedule of meetings provided. It was confirmed that the next Council meeting to be held on Wednesday 7 September 2011 would focus on the Summer Examinations Series

The next full Council meeting would take place on Wednesday 19 October 2011.

The Vice-Chair thanked members and officers for their contributions to the meeting and commended the standard of the Council papers provided.

