

Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Minutes of the forty-ninth meeting of the Council, held at 1000 hours on Wednesday 22 October 2003 in the City Hotel, Armagh.

Present :	Dr A Lennon (Chairman)	Mr B Carlin
	Dr A Murray	Ms P O'Farrell
	Mr J Clarke	Mrs H McClenaghan
	Professor P Roebuck	Mr B Turtle
	Mr D Thompson	Mrs D Black
	Ms M Watson	
	Mr D Woods	Assessor, Department of Education
	Mr G Boyd	Chief Executive
	Dr A Walker	Head of Education Services
	Mr D Mulholland	Head of Corporate Services
	Mr W Corbett	
	Mr M Quinn	Item 5 only
	Miss N Kennedy	Manager, Chief Executive's Office

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms J Bell; Mr J Collins; Mr J Ellison; and Mr J Lee.

2 Chairman's Business

The Chairman welcomed members to Armagh and outlined the programme for the Council and the Joint meeting with NCCA over the next 2 days.

He informed members that Mrs Briege O'Neill had resigned from the Council due to conflicting pressures between her own position and commitment of time to CCEA. A replacement will not be put in place unless certain expertise is required.

The Chairman congratulated David Mulholland on his recent appointment to Head of Corporate Services.

A special meeting of the Business Committee would convene after the Council meeting.

3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 17 September 2003

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2003, were approved by the Council and a copy signed by the Chairman.

Action points

The Chief Executive reported that :

- The Mark of Excellence submission would be summarised for marketing purposes;
- The role of parents would be incorporated into the programme for the Joint Meeting on 23 October;
- Work is in underway on marketing information on CCEA's dual role as a regulator and an awarding body; and a press release will be published detailing CCEA's performance for summer 2003.

Working Relationships between Council and its Committee

The Chairman tabled a proposal which suggested a way forward for defining and refining the relationship between Council and its sub-committees to ensure that Council exercised effective control over policy development.

The Chief Executive said that Council is required to oversee, agree and approve policies and development advice to Ministers and the essence of the proposal is to ensure that Council has enough time to discuss and debate policy at its earliest stage with a view to :

- Provide the policy framework for reporting back;
- Ensure quality controls are put in place; and
- Set down parameters to ensure the work is done to an acceptable standard.

The Chairman said that it would be necessary to set aside 1, possibly 2 meetings to debate areas such as Qualifications - the 6th Form debate; and Key Stage 3.

Members were content with the proposal.

4 Committees

Audit Committee

The Chief Executive reported that, 128 risks had been identified; it was recommended that there should be no more than 20 and that the framework should be reviewed.

E-Learning & Services Committee

The Chief Executive reported that John Anderson had been invited to the last meeting of the Committee to talk about the draft emPowering schools strategy document. The latest draft has been circulated to members of the committee and will be discussed at its meeting on Friday 24 October.

1 additional manager will be appointed to oversee the development of CCEA's e-learning strategy and will report directly to the Chief Executive.

Dr Murray asked that the document be circulated to Council Members.

Mr Woods welcomed this development, he agreed that we need to ensure that the appropriate arrangements and structures are in place going forward.

Curriculum & Assessment

Dr Mulryne said that many of the items discussed at the meeting on 1 October would be covered at the Council meeting.

He drew members' attention to Item 5 of the tabled minutes regarding the inadequacy of the current pre-school arrangements and asked if the Council could consider bringing the pre-school year into line with current school settings. The Chief Executive said this was a difficult area as there are no statutory requirements. Mr Woods said there were real practical issues that needed to be addressed and that pre-school provision should be harmonised with foundation stage.

The Chairman asked for representations to be made to the department.

Dr Mulryne reported that:

- Item 6 – Early Years Enriched Curriculum Pilot : full evaluation report to be presented to the committee to give reassurances to concerns raised; and
- Item 8 – Foundation Stage Assessment Pilot (Year 1) : committee approved the 2nd pilot but urged caution regarding manageability; resources and support issues.

Business Committee

The Chairman reported that :

- Payment of expenses – it was agreed that Council members' expenses will be paid quarterly in arrears. Calendar quarters being: March; June; September and December.
- The Chief Executive had received a written assurance from the Chief Executive of AQA that all Northern Ireland candidates' scripts had been marked. Work is ongoing in the area of resolving core problems with the English Awarding Bodies and the Chief Executive is working with QCA on these issues.

Dr Murray congratulated the Chief Executive on securing this assurance.

- Finances are under tight control and are on schedule to meet targets for 2003/2004.
- Business Case for E-Learning Manager : approved by the committee and the appointment will be advertised.
- ICAA – joint venture has been very successful with both parties making a profit.
- Market Share – we have 60% of the market share in Northern Ireland. Our objective still remains 100%.

Members discussed CCEA's market share position and raised the following issues :

- The need to raise market share in RE and Modern Languages. A new, more attractive RE specification is being developed.
- Raise our profile within the FE Sector;
- Improve and promote our services throughout the province, targeting principals and heads of department.

The Chief Executive agreed to look at an appropriate way to disseminate CCEA's GCE and GCSE statistics to schools to continue to increase market share.

5 Qualifications

Examinations 2003

The Chairman welcomed Mr Martin Quinn and Mr Walter Corbett to the meeting. Mr Corbett and Mr Quinn gave detailed presentations on the Summer Examinations 2003.

Members discussed maintaining standards over time and CCEA's role as a regulator. The Chairman asked that regular analysis be carried out to ensure that CCEA maintains high standards.

Mr Carlin said that the role of invigilators was very important and that proper training was vital.

Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) development

C/49/1

Dr Walker reported that the CATs summary and report had been discussed in full at the Regulation and Qualifications Committee on 8 September. The CATs advisory group, chaired by Brian Turtle, also discussed the issues arising out of the committee meeting and have incorporated the changes into this report, namely:

- Timeframed milestones have been set out for 2006 and 2007;
- Programme of Work has been recommended;
- Developments taken forward in conjunction with those in England and Wales have been emphasised in the report;
- Development of vocational qualifications.

Mr Turtle thanked Mr McCune and Dr Egerton for the considerable amount of work in drawing up the report.

Professor Roebuck expressed some concern about some of the content of the report. After some discussion it was agreed that Mr Turtle and Professor Roebuck would work on the refinements and resolve all the issues before presenting the final advice to the Minister.

Members agreed the advice subject to all of the comments being taken on board.

Update on the Key Skills Review

Dr Walker updated members on the latest position regarding the Key Skills Review. He said that the regulatory authorities had agreed the specifications for qualifications, portfolios and moderation. However there has been disagreement on how assessment is used in external tests.

He said that CCEA had suggested that a managed framework be set up and that from within this framework the 3 countries, England Wales and Northern Ireland would progress individually but allow the process to be managed jointly. This would enable the assessment of key skills qualifications.

Members agreed that the following issues be taken into consideration

- the need for relevance and rigour in key skills;
- the use of internal reference measures;
- the need for national and international currency;
- The need to demonstrate the value of key skills;
- the importance of a proper assessment regime;
- Skills and competences must be valid for assessment;
- Those applying key skills must possess the knowledge to enable them to do so; and
- The assessment of key skills must be sufficiently reliable and manageable on all education and training aspects.

The Chairman sought assurance that the Northern Ireland position would be made clear on the issue of Key Skills and that CCEA would not be drawn into something that they did not agree with.

The Chief Executive said that CCEA would state their position clearly. Members agreed that Dr Walker should continue to seek a way forward and report back at a future meeting.

6 Curriculum

Draft advice on the implementation of a languages' programme into Primary Schools in Northern Ireland **C/49/1**

Dr Mulryne reported that the Curriculum & Assessment Committee had asked for Council to give its backing and urge the Department to adopt a long-term strategy for introducing language teaching into the primary school. He said that the advice had been revised in the light of lengthy discussions at two committee meetings which raised the following issues:

- A strategic approach to implementation;
- Sufficient funding and resources are sourced by the Department of Education;
- Support for in-service training and guidance materials for schools already involved in language teaching;
- Sufficient linguistic expertise to be secured; and
- Further work to be done on a coherent strategy to ensure smooth transition from primary to post-primary schools.

Members welcomed the initiative, and agreed the advice subject to the incorporation of the above issues. The Chairman asked Dr Mulryne to ensure that the key principles within the advice were shared with the Council for policy purposes.

Update on Key Stage 3 Consultation Process

Dr Walker drew members attention to the tabled paper and updated members on progress on the Key Stage 3 Consultation to date.

Mrs Watson was concerned that she had not yet received copies of the Key Stage 3 document she had requested the week previous to the Council meeting.

The Chief Executive said that he was aware that the administration of the exercise was not as good as he had expected. He stated that there were a number of incidents where the process had not worked effectively and that he would be looking into this.

Professor Roebuck said that although the quality of the presentation at Coleraine was excellent, the presenters appeared nervous of questions.

Mrs Black was concerned that the way in which the presentation was put across to home economics teachers was one of 'take it or leave it', and said that perhaps a different approach should be adopted.

Mr McKee said that although the presentation in Fermanagh was presented professionally there was still some reservations amongst principals in the western board area with regard to resources and limitations on budgets.

The Chief Executive said that all of the feedback would be taken on board and that detailed data was required going forward.

The Chairman asked all Council members to take part in the Key Stage 3 consultation. Mr Carlin asked for Council members to be supplied with briefing papers prior to their attendance at any events outlining what they were required to do.

Update on development of Pupil Profile and Update on ALTA

It was agreed that the development of the pupil profile be put on the Curriculum Review agenda and also be part of the E-Learning & Services Committee.

ALTA – it was agreed that a background paper and presentation be prepared for the E-Learning & Services Committee at a future meeting.

7 TMT Update

The Chief Executive reported on :

- Costello – an extension of 1 month has been given and the committee will now report back at the end of November;
- Score concert was a tremendous success on 17 October.

The Chairman asked members to make every effort to attend next year's event and for those who had to travel suitable arrangements would be made.

- Anne-Marie Duffy has been appointed Examinations Manager and will take up her post from 1 November 2003, prior to Walter Corbett's retirement.

8 Finance position as at 30 September 2003

Mr Mulholland reported that the financial position at the end of September was slightly ahead of budget with a positive variance of £35,000.

The budget has increased significantly to £21.3M. The majority of funding has already been confirmed with the baseline figure rising to £11.5M largely due to bids approved by the Department. Significant progress has been made with project funding with all items being confirmed, including the Belfast Employability Project.

He confirmed that the year to date figures show that we are broadly in line with our spending.

Mr McKee congratulated Mr Mulholland on his very competent presentation and wished him well in his new post.

9 Any other business

None identified by the secretariat.

10 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed for **Wednesday 17 December 2003** at 1000 hrs in Room 111, followed by Christmas Lunch.

Chairman

Date