

## **CCEA**

## **COUNCIL**

Minutes of the one hundred and thirty-ninth meeting of Council, held on Wednesday 24 June 2020, at 1.30 pm via MS Teams.

**Present :**

Mr T Carson (Chair)	Dr L Caul
Mrs C Harpur	Mr RJ Thompson
Mr C McKinney	Mrs C Fitzsimons
Ms R Byrne	Dr A Kerr
Mrs K O'Hare	Mr B Wilson
Ms P Slevin	Mrs P Leitch

Mr J Edwards (Chief Executive)  
Mrs L Scott (Director of Finance & Corporate Services)  
Miss M Farragher (Director of Education)  
Mrs S King (Head of Regulation : Items 1-5 and Item 7 only)  
Mr J Daly (Financial Services Manager)

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

### **Introduction**

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting and advised on the protocols for participation.

### **1 Apologies**

An apology was received from Mrs S Kirk.

### **2 Conflict of Interests**

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

### **3 Chair's Business**

#### ***Committee Chairs***

The Chair confirmed that members were advised of the following new appointments on 23 June 2020.

#### ***Chair of Regulatory Committee***

The Chair thanked members for their expressions of interest in regards to the Chair of the Regulatory Committee, and confirmed that Dr Les Caul had agreed to Chair the Committee. He thanked Dr Caul and advised that he had resigned from the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, with immediate effect.

#### ***Chair of Audit & Risk Assurance Committee***

The Chair confirmed and thanked Mr Cormac McKinney for agreeing to Chair the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee. This would also be with immediate effect.

#### ***Sub-Group of Council***

The Chair recognised the current pressures on the Executive Team as they continue with preparations for awarding and suggested that the sub-group convene (with the Executive Team) towards the end of August, once the issue of results (GCSE and A Level) had been completed. Clarification was sought on when Council/Committee meetings would resume in Clarendon. The Chair stated that he would be guided by the advice from the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive advised CCEA would follow relevant PHA

guidance and advise members when it would be safe to return. The Chair confirmed that members would be kept informed.

The Chair of the Education Committee asked for a meeting with the Chief Executive and Director of Education to discuss reconstituting the Education Committee. This was agreed.

### ***Chair's Report to Council***

The Chair confirmed that he had attended no external events since the last meeting. He advised that he had spoken with senior Department Officials to keep them informed of developments.

Meetings with the Chief Executive: The Chair confirmed that the regular 1-1 meetings with the Chief Executive continued on a fortnightly basis via telephone and MS teams, to update him on a range of issues and developments in regards to the operational effectiveness of the organisation.

This concluded the Chair's report.

### ***Chief Executive's Covid-19 Situation Report***

#### ***Corporate***

The Chief Executive reported that staff have returned to the Mallusk site on a phased basis. A range of matters were being finalised in regards to staff returning to the Clarendon and William Ritchie Buildings through a hybrid of home and site working. This will be in adherence with the health and safety advice, and PHE guidelines. Appropriate signage in regards to safe distance requirements have been allocated throughout the buildings, and a range of cleansing materials will also be made available for all staff.

#### ***Education***

The Chief Executive advised that a small number of matters continue to be worked through in regards to private candidates, on an individual basis.

Work has begun on the provision of advice to DE on General Qualifications Arrangements for 2020/21. Information will come forward to Council for consideration once developed.

The Chief Executive said that it was hoped social distancing requirements would become clearer towards August, and reported that Scotland were considering a return to schools without restrictions, however the position could change.

Information on DE's Restart Programme was circulated to members. A high-level paper on curriculum planning has been issued to centres, advising on planning for the re-opening of schools. The Education Authority (EA) is developing guidance on PPE and security arrangements.

A Council member sought clarification on whether it would be possible for CCEA to collate a data repository for resources for online learning to assist in curriculum planning. The Chair suggested that this responsibility lay with the Education Authority. ***Addendum : This paragraph was amended to read 'resources for online qualifications specifications.'***

The Chief Executive explained that EA hosts a website that includes sections dedicated to a range of resources and links to CCEA materials. This is in the early stages of development, however, is gathering pace as contributions increase. He recognised the point made by the Council member and suggested that more communications are required from the EA Restart Programme. He confirmed that officers have been active in providing updates in this area. The link would be issued to members to view.

The Director of Education (DoE) confirmed that she would discuss signposting to microsites. She advised that the Curriculum Design Project had been established to create a more dynamic approach in terms of provision of curriculum planning and design of materials for the CCEA website, school principals have

been involved in providing feedback to subject officers in taking this work forward. She suggested that the website would be used to share case studies and examples of resources moving forwards.

The Chair asked that the Chief Executive to ensure the appropriate representative take this matter back to the relevant sub-group of the programme. The Chief Executive confirmed that this would be fed back to the Standards and Learning Group. He reminded members that the Home Learning website had been developed in association with the Education Authority (and C2K), where resources will be cross-referenced into the appropriate sectors. He suggested that CCEA interface as many resources as possible.

Members welcomed the range of curriculum guidance available in regards to blended learning and support for teachers.

### ***Regulation***

CCEA's Appeals process was launched on 23 June, light touch press coverage followed on 24 June. To date enquiries have been minimal. The Chief Executive confirmed that the principles followed remained as agreed by Council, supported by detailed information in the guidelines. The document was live under the Covid-19 are of the CCEA website.

### ***Communications***

Members noted that communications remained relatively light both in regards to media and help desk queries.

This concluded the Chief Executive's Situation Report to Council.

## **4 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 May 2020**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 May 2020, were proposed by Dr Les Caul, and seconded by Mrs Paula Leitch as a true and accurate record. A copy would be made available for the Chair to sign once normal business arrangements resume.

### ***Action points***

The Chief Executive updated members on the status of the action points. Members were content with the information provided.

## **Minutes of additional Council Covid-19 Briefing Meetings**

The Chair advised that the following meetings had been convened to appraise Council of the current situation in regards to arrangements and mitigations for Covid-19.

### ***27 May 2020***

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2020, were proposed by Ms Patricia Slevin, and seconded by Dr Ana Kerr, as a true and accurate record.

### ***3 June 2020***

With the addition of Mrs Carol Fitzsimons and Mr Cormac McKinney to the list of attendees, the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2020, were proposed by Mrs Carol Fitzsimons, and seconded by Mr Robert Thompson, as a true and accurate record.

### ***10 June 2020***

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2020, were proposed by Mrs Paula Leitch, and seconded by Mrs Kathleen O'Hare, as a true and accurate record.

*17 June 2020*

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2020, were proposed by Mrs Marlene Kinghan, and seconded by Ms Rose Byrne, as a true and accurate record.

A Council member wished to place on record her thanks to the administrative staff for all of the documentation pertaining to the Council meeting and briefings over the last 5 weeks. The Chair wished to endorse these marks and extended his thanks to Ms Noleen Kennedy, Manager of the Council Secretariat for supporting the Council during this exceptionally busy period.

The Chair recognised that the administrative burden had been particularly demanding during this time, and agreed to review the frequency of the meeting moving forwards.

Members were satisfied that the frequent updates had been beneficial during this time, and would welcome a review in working practices in order to expedite Council business in a timely manner moving forwards.

*General*

The Chief Executive advised that the draft business plan for 2020/21 would be submitted to DE on 28 June. The original plan has been amended to include the impact of Covid-19, and will be brought back to members for consideration in due course.

The Chief Executive clarified that the issue in regards to an Awarding Body furloughing NI staff had been reversed. He understood that all processes were on track to deliver the issue of results on time.

## **5 Correspondence**

The Chief Executive drew attention to the following correspondence :

- 2020-2021 Resource Budget Allocation
- General Qualifications Arrangements for 2020/21
- SBRI Challenge Fund 2019/20
- Circular from Minister Weir to School Principals – Announcement to publish New School Day guidance

Members noted the information provided.

*Re-order of Agenda*

At this point in the meeting the agenda was re-ordered to take Item 7 Regulation.

## **7 Regulation**

*For Approval*

**Annual Statement of Compliance 2019**

**C/139/3**

The Head of Regulation drew attention to the document and confirmed there were no issues of non-compliance during 2019.

Clarification was sought and received on a small number of points, and the member was satisfied with the explanations received.

Members formally approved the report, proposed by Dr Ana Kerr and seconded by Mrs Kathleen O'Hare.

The Head of Regulation left the meeting at this point.

The agenda reverted to its normal running order.

## **6 Education**

### ***For Approval***

#### ***Draft Proposals : Assessment Arrangements in GCSE Science Qualifications***

***C/139/1***

The Director of Education (DoE) reminded members that a review conducted on GCSE Science qualifications had been conducted during 2019, and following initial proposals put forward to Council it was agreed to consult with the sector in regards to reducing the assessment burden for candidates and centres. She advised, that at the time of writing, the proposals were developed before the impact of Covid-19. Following the alternative awarding arrangements for Summer 2020 examinations, and subsequent changes for Summer 2021, it was prudent to suggest that the implementation of such proposals may be delayed by one year.

The DoE provided a detailed overview of each of the following proposals (detail provided in the paper):

Proposal 1 : Removal of Examination Series

Proposal 2 : Removal of Tiering from GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics

Proposal 3 : Revision of Practical Assessment Arrangements – Double Award Science

Proposal 4 : Revision of Practical Assessment Arrangements – Single Award Science

Proposal 5 : Separate Sciences – GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics

Proposal 6 : Reduction in Specification Content/Review of Science Qualification Portfolio

She advised that feedback from the sector was clear that reducing the assessment burden would be welcome, however suggested that discussions resume with the sector in regards to introducing and managing changes to the specifications, and in light of the lessons that will be learned from the impact of Covid-19.

Members commended the clarity of the information provided. They discussed the proposals in detail, sought and received clarification on a number of points, and were satisfied that, taking all into consideration, a full revision, including the reduction of content of GCSE Single Award Science and Double Award Science (Proposal 6) was required.

A Council member asked if a staged approach could be taken in implementing the changes to provide schools with more certainty over a longer period.

It was recognised that given the extent of the disruption to schools at this time, it may be preferable to conduct the full revision during the next academic year. The DoE agreed to this possibility.

The Chief Executive sought and received confirmation that members were content with Proposal 6.

### ***Formal Approval***

Proposal 6 : was formally proposed by Mrs Paula Leitch and seconded by Mrs Kathleen O'Hare.

## ***For Information***

### ***Insights 2019 Report***

***C/139/2***

The Director of Education (DoE) presented the Insights 2019 Report and gave a comprehensive overview of the main component parts of the document, drawing attention to the influences of subject choice (final section of the report).

A Council member sought clarification on whether an impact analysis could be carried out on the choice of subjects in KS4 having on life choices and career opportunities, and whether a comparability study had been undertaken on whether young people were being steered towards taking less difficult subjects (ie Entry Level). The DoE advised that in working with ETI positive discussions have been held with schools in regards to curriculum and qualifications offer. She suggested that the Monitoring the Curriculum Report would be beneficial for new members.

A Council member asked for greater investigation into the qualifications area to allow better and greater opportunities to extend the range on offer. She advised that she had taken part in the Quality Assessment activity and commended the exercise.

A Council member welcomed the reference to languages being the strongest subject and sought clarification on whether there would be an opportunity to seek students' perspectives. The DoE confirmed that the Pupil Voice was not included in the Insights Report, however it was intended to include students and seek their feedback in the next phase of Curriculum Monitoring programme. She advised that this work had been delayed due to Covid-19 health restrictions.

Members welcomed the report and looked forward, with interest, to the 2020 report in light of the current circumstances in regards to the alternative assessment arrangements for Summer 2020 examination results, and subsequent lessons learned.

The Chair wished to place on record his thanks to the DoE and her team for the work completed, and commended the content of the report, recognising its value to the Education Sector.

## **8 Audit**

### ***Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Minutes : 18 June 2020***

The Chair drew attention to the minutes of the ARAC meeting held on 18 June 2020, provided for members' information. He wished to place on record his thanks to Dr Caul for his management of the committee business during his term as Chair.

### ***For consideration***

#### ***Corporate Risk Register Summary – June 2020***

***C/139/4***

The Chair reminded members that the CRR was a significant document for Council during the Covid-19 health crisis and under current circumstances.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services (DoFCS) assured members that the Executive Team continued to review the CRR monthly to ensure risks are identified, managed and appropriate mitigations put in place. The CRR is also presented at each ARAC meeting for consideration.

She drew attention to the detail of the paper and advised that 5 out of the 6 Corporate Risks have retained a residual risk of 20.

Dr Caul wished to place on record his thanks to the DoFCS and her team for the substantial amount of work carried out, and commended the way in which CCEA conduct its risk management function, in particular during the current circumstances with the ever changing landscape, and uncertainty.

The Chair added his thanks to the staff involved, and commended the significant amount of work carried out to ensure the CRR is a living and accessible document.

Ms Byrne left the meeting at this point.

### ***For Approval***

#### ***2019/20 Annual Report & Accounts and Report to those Charged with Governance*** **C/139/5**

The Chief Executive advised that the revised draft was considered by the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting on 18 June 2020. Members were content to recommend the documentation to Council for final consideration. He confirmed that all governance processes were complete.

The Chair commended the clarity and content of the document and thanked officers for their contributions.

The Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 were formally proposed by Dr Les Caul and seconded by Mrs Carol Fitzsimons.

## **9 Finance**

### ***For Information***

#### ***Finance Committee Minutes : 27 May 2020***

The Chair drew attention to the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 27 May 2020, provided for members' information. He thanked Mr Thompson for managing the work of the committee.

#### ***Interim Finance Report as at 31 March 2020*** **C/139/6**

Members were content with the information provided.

#### ***2020/21 Budget Allocation*** **C/139/7**

The DoFCS confirmed that the budget allocation for 2020/21 had been received (detail provided in Appendix 1). Work has commenced on realigning the funding in line with business need. She was pleased to report a total allocation of £20.6623M to include an increase of £1.157M from the opening position in 2019/20. A revised bid of £2.86M was submitted in regards to Covid-19 funding and a verbal indication has been received that £1.6M can be allocated if required.

The DoFCS wished to place on record that this had been a particularly difficult year with significant challenges and changes required in the light of Covid-19 pandemic and the cancellation of the Summer 2020 examination.

The Chair welcomed the additional allocation and wished to place on record his thanks to the DoFCS and her team for the extensive amount of work completed under the current circumstances.

#### ***Management Statement/Financial Memorandum*** **C/139/8**

The Chair advised members that in-line with best practice, the MSFM had been issued to Council on an annual basis. He advised that work had begun to revise the approach and format of the MSFM for ALBs before the Covid-19 restrictions were put in place, and it was anticipated this would be re-started in the near future.

Members noted the information provided.

## **Planning and Performance**

## ***For Information***

### ***Operational Plan 2019/20 End Year Report (by exception)***

***C/139/9***

The DoFCS drew attention to the information provided in paper C/139/9 and advised that 2 out of the 3 measures that had not been achieved were directly impacted upon by Covid-19. She advised that, like many other ALBs the CCEA business had been significantly disrupted in the last quarter of 2019/20, however confirmed that a significant amount of work had been completed prior to lockdown with a considerable amount of targets being achieved during 2019/20.

Members noted the information provided.

#### **10 Any Other Business**

None identified.

#### **11 Date of Next Meeting**

The Chair advised that there would be one further Council Briefing on Wednesday 1 July 2020. He recognised that there was a need for Council to continue to receive updates in regards to the management of the business in the current crisis and suggested that the frequency of meetings be reduced to fortnightly briefings over the summer period (following the July holiday period), and would be kept under review moving forward.

Members recognised that all staff concerned need to take holidays during the summer period.

A member suggested that there was a need for Council to consider education issues in depth, in particular the concerns in the Curriculum. The Chair recognised there were significant education issues requiring discussion, and agreed to discuss the format with the Chief Executive, with a view regular sessions be used for focussing on educational issues.

The Chief Executive stated that the weekly meetings had been of value with a formal record of each being kept. He recognised the importance of Council discussions on the educational and regulatory landscape and advised the longer term issues would start to emerge that would require discussion.

A Council member asked for flexibility in the timing of the Council briefings. The Chair agreed.

He thanked members and officers for their contributions to the meeting.