

CCEA

COUNCIL

Minutes of the one hundred and fifty-fifth meeting of Council held on Thursday 24 November 2022 at 10.00am in CCEA Headquarters, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present:

Mr T O'Reilly (Chair)	Dr L Caul
Miss M Corrigan	Ms C Fitzsimons
Prof P Hanna	Mrs A Kingsley
Mrs P Leitch	Mr H McCarthy
Ms P Slevin	Mr R Smyth
Mr C Coffey (NV)	Mr A Stevens (NV)

In attendance:

- Mrs L Scott - Interim Chief Executive Officer (ICEO)
- Mr J Daly Temporary Director of Finance & Corporate Services (TDFCS)
- Ms A Swann Temporary Director of Examinations - TDE
- Mrs S King Head of Regulation (HOR)
- Mr R Caldwell (Department of Education, NI)
- Mr C Wightman (Minute Taker, Human Resources)

Introduction

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting, noting this was the first in-person meeting this year.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs D O'Connor, Mrs K O'Hare, Mr B Wilson and Mr N Wardlow.

2 Conflicts of Interest

None identified.

3 Chair's Business and Correspondence

The Chair notified members that Mrs S Sellars has resigned from Council with immediate effect having secured a new career opportunity. The Chair indicated he would be seeking nominations, followed by an election, to fill the vacancy of Vice Chair. The Chair added that a letter of appreciation would be organised to thank Mrs Sellars for her service.

The Chair informed members that there was now a need to nominate a named Council member who would be the contact in line with the CCEA Whistle-blower policy. The Chair will write to members seeking nominations.

The Chair noted that some members would be leaving the Council in October 2023. He stated that he would write to the Department of Education regarding instigating a recruitment process to fill the resultant vacancies. He added that he would welcome thoughts from current members on skills required of new appointees.

The Chair drew attention to the following correspondence:

- ED Correspondence for Northern Ireland Executive – Update on ALB operating model
- ED 221018 KMcC to LS confirming Minister’s decision on standards 2023 and commissioning further advice

A general discussion ensued, with the Chair noting a query on how this would be applied to cohort level. The ICEO indicated this was part of CCEA’s consideration for the Summer Series 2023, with a meeting next month to discuss a possible response, incorporating a risk-based approach and identifying what requires a tailored approach.

The TDE mentioned that there was a range of scenarios, which require an agreed position on part of CCEA, to be communicated to the Department of Education. One member asked that the Committee discuss the proposed advice and report back to the Council.

ACTION POINT – Proposed advice to be discussed at the next Education Committee meeting. HOR agreed to attend the Committee meeting.

- ED Funding letter to CCEA – Fair Start Report Funding 100k
- Business Plan Commissioning letter – 2023-24 NDPB Business Plan – CCEA
In response to a member’s query, The ICEO confirmed that the Department of Education were updated on both technical and operational issues via fortnightly meetings together with monthly oversight meetings involving the CEO and the Deputy Secretary. A member stressed the importance that the 2023/24 challenges were recognised.
- BP 221103 Letter to CCEA – Outcome of Mid-Year (Quarter 2) Monitoring

The TDFC, in response to a members query, confirmed that a response had been issued recently to the Department of Education.

- AU Correspondence Every Child letter from DE
- AU Correspondence 1 – 20220930 – ICO letter to CCEA
A member noted the comprehensive nature of the ICO report, that a Data Protection Impact Assessment had been carried out, with a result of ‘no action’. TDFC informed Council that a subsequent letter had been received, withdrawing the report in its entirety across all jurisdictions.
- GOV Appointment of Assessors to The Council (CCEA) – Letter from Linsey Farrell to Tommy O’Reilly 6.10.22
- GOV CCEA 2022-23 Mid-Year Governance Statement – feedback letter

4 Ratification of Minutes of Previous Meetings held on 29 September 2022 and 13 October 2022

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 29 September 2022 were proposed by Mrs Carol Fitzsimons and seconded by Mrs Anne Kingsley (subject to the correction of

some typographical errors) as a true and accurate record. A copy (with typographical errors corrected) would be made available for the Chair to approve.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 13 October 2022 were proposed by Mr Rob Smyth and seconded by Mrs Anne Kingsley as a true and accurate record. A copy would be made available for the Chair to approve.

5 Interim Chief Executive's Update (Verbal)

The ICEO provided a verbal update on the key issues since the meeting on 29th September:

- The Summer Series 2022 has been completed and, although volumes were lower than expected, it was received well.
- The November Series 2022 has just started.
- There was an announcement on the awarding approach for the Summer Series 2023, which had a positive reception.
- Mrs Corinne Latham has been appointed as the new temporary Director of Curriculum and Assessment. The ICEO indicated that she and the Chair were in discussion regarding the work to be undertaken by Mrs Latham and would take into consideration suggestions from a member regarding induction.
- CCEA are required to compose a response to the Department of Education on how CCEA will align with the Department's Corporate Plan. The Chair indicated that discussions regarding priorities and CCEA's Business Plan were ongoing with the Department.
- CCEA will need to consider whether to respond to the Department for the Economy Consultation document on principal underpinning of future vocational education specifications.
- In October, CCEA retained its Silver Award from the Investors in People organisation, a noteworthy achievement in these challenging times. Members congratulated the CCEA team on the achievement.
- CCEA is monitoring current industrial relations issues involving teaching unions and how this might impact upon the work of CCEA.
- Planning has begun for a full return to examinations in 2023/24 academic year, and CCEA will work with Departmental colleagues in relation to required funding. A member asked if there was funding available to adapt examination papers for minority groups. The TDE explained that papers were not modified for every situation, however, access arrangements will likely apply.

A discussion took place on how Council agrees CCEA's priorities. A member noted that the capacity for Council to discuss the priorities would be challenging. The Chair indicated that Council would meet to discuss priorities. Following a general discussion regarding the Department's priorities, CCEA organisation structure and availability of funding, the Chair indicated that liaison with the Department would continue.

Lessons Learned 2022

C/155/1

The ICEO presented a draft report and provided an overview of the lessons learned from the Summer Series 2022. The ICEO informed the panel that the Department had responded to a draft of the document and feedback had been received earlier today, which will be addressed. It was agreed that the final version be brought back to Council and would also reference governance arrangements.

A general discussion ensued, noting the pressure on existing staff, the difficulties in sourcing and retaining examiners, and the impact next year due to potential industrial action by teachers.

TDFC updated the Council regarding the Corporate Risk Register (CRR). CR1 (Failure to effectively manage the disruption caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic impacting on CCEAs ability to carry out its core business functions including failure to implement effective processes to award CCEA accredited qualifications) residual risk score has been lowered. This is primarily linked to the successful completion of the Summer 2022 examination series and the contingency series.

The risk register would also continue to be updated to include activities linked to summer 2023 awarding and standards. One member asked that the risk relating to examiners be clearly represented in the Corporate Risk Register.

The Chair indicated that the CRR would be discussed at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). The Chair sought members to approve and second the document. Mrs Leitch proposed approval of the document and Prof Hanna seconded.

ACTION – Corporate Risk Register to progress to the next ARAC.

7 Education

Chair's Verbal Report on the Education Committee 10 October 2022

The Chair of the Education Committee, Mr McCarthy, reported on the main items discussed at the meeting on 10 October, including Mr Caldwell being co-opted on a trial basis as a non-voting member; Fair Start report; staff pressures; and SEN support.

Advanced Information Progress Report

C/155/3

The TDE updated the Council, highlighted the current risks, noting that actions that were being put in place to mitigate these. The TDE emphasised the 'no fail' nature of the work.

November Series Readiness Report

C/155/4

The ICEO stated there were no major issues to report. The TDE informed Council that the Series was progressing well, notwithstanding the possibility of industrial action by teachers over the next fortnight.

Independent Review of Education

C/155/5

The Chair stated that Council had liaised with the Review staff regarding alternative models for the curriculum and assessment. The ICEO informed Council that the final report was expected to be released within the next 12 months. Areas relevant to CCEA have been highlighted and The ICEO indicated that CCEA's position would be assessed upon finalisation of the report. A brief discussion ensued.

8 Regulation

Chair's Verbal Report on Regulation Committee 10 November 2022

The Chair of the Regulation Committee, Anne Kingsley, reported on the main items discussed at the meeting on 10 November, including the Business Plan, review of the Summer Series, the response to the Covid Plan, and the Department for the Economy's report on funding for CCEA Regulation activities.

The Chair informed Council that both he and The ICEO had met with the Department for the Economy regarding Vocational Qualifications, the Curriculum and proposed Assessment arrangements. The Chair added that a consultation document would be issued in the near future on core principles for future vocational qualifications and the Department were keen for CCEA to be involved.

9 Policies and Strategies

Draft Corporate Plan

C/155/6

The ICEO reminded Council that they had been provided with a copy of the draft Corporate Plan in May. There was now a need to realign CCEA's Draft Corporate Plan dates to match the Department of Education and to work with both the Department of Education and the Department for the Economy regarding CCEA's strategic priorities. CCEA's Corporate Plan will be further refined in the coming months as DE's Corporate Plan is finalised.

The Chair noted that members were content with CCEA's current Draft Plan and indicated a session would be held for Council to discuss strategic themes and corporate objectives for the next five years.

ACTION POINT – Council meeting to discuss CCEA strategic / corporate objectives.

10 Any Other Business

CCEA staff left the meeting to facilitate Council to discuss any other business items in private.

11 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 26th January 2023 at 1.30pm