

The Interim Chief Executive reported that structural arrangements had been put in place to take this work forward. He confirmed that the deadlines for interim and final reports would be met.

Concern was expressed that DE anticipated the work to be funded within CCEA's existing budget. Clarification was sought on whether there was any flexibility around this. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that once the work had been scoped he would meet with DE to discuss any funding implications. The DE Observer confirmed that this was a significant piece of work and needed to be completed to a high standard.

- *Review of Qualifications Regulation (19 October)* : due to the Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications, the DE/DEL review of qualifications regulation has been put on hold.

5 Governance and Accountability

Accountability Review Meeting : Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2012

Members noted the minutes of the last Governance and Accountability Review meeting.

The Chairperson reported that the Minister had accepted the invitation to visit CCEA. This opportunity would be used to highlight the work of the organisation and the need for investment in technology to enhance CCEA's examinations services.

Clarification was sought on the status of the Qualifications Technology Roadmap Business Cases. It was confirmed that these were currently being redrafted and would be submitted to the Finance Committee at its next meeting (in parallel with submission to DE). It was confirmed that DfP approval was required.

Item 3 : Financial Management :Clarification was sought on whether DE would make any allowances given the difficulties CCEA face on the timing of certain income and expenditure items. It was confirmed that there would be no allowances made as Treasury Guidelines have to be followed. However, DE confirmed these difficulties would be taken into consideration.

6 Finance and Planning

Finance Committee Report : 26 September 2012

The Chairman of the Committee reported on the following :

- Finance Report as at 30 August. An overall underspend of £161K was reported and an estimated £595K of earned income anticipated. Members noted the reduced DE allocation and subsequent revised work plan. DE are aware of the implications and impact of the cutbacks.
- October Monitoring Round : it was confirmed that £82K had been released back to DE and £105K additional capital funding had been bid for.

Overall budget was on target at this time.

- Procurement Update. Members noted the difficulties CCEA were experiencing in agreeing the procurement schedule with BELB.

- Business Cases : 2 business cases were approved by the committee.
- *Information has been exempted under section 43 (2) (Commercial interests) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Under section 43 (2) information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).*

A Council member raised the maintenance of the ground outside the Clarendon Building. The DoCS confirmed that the matter would be addressed as soon as possible.

Clarification was sought on the status of the Courier contract. The Finance Manager (FM) confirmed that a date had been agreed with CPD and that there had been no break in service.

Finance Report as at 30 September 2012

FC/103/1

The FM reported an overall underspend of £403K (2%) at this time. The three main areas of underspend were :

- Staff salaries (£175K)
- Examiner fees, related teacher release and meeting costs (£160K)
- Facilities maintenance (£79K)

This underspend has been partially offset by an overspend in question paper print costs. Clarification was sought on why additional printing costs have been incurred. The FM explained that this was within contract to a particular provider and the volume of question papers had also increased.

A Council member asked if 'examiner fees' and 'teacher release' costs could be separated in future reports.

The FM confirmed that project spend was largely on target. However there was an underspend due to delays on charges being received from suppliers of the computer based assessment tools. This would come into line at the end of October.

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 September 2012

C/103/2

Members noted the information provided.

7 Education Strategy

Education Committee Report : 10 October 2012

The minutes were tabled for members' information.

The Chairperson reported on the following :

- *Statutory Rule on New Levels of Progression* : members were informed that the NI Assembly Education Committee had not yet approved the Rule. Further information requested by the Committee has been provided.(the transcript on this debate was circulated to CCEA's Education Committee)

This issue was being discussed at the Committee on 24 October and it was hoped clarification would be provided to allow decisions to be made. The DE

Representative confirmed that the committee were seeking assurances from DE about flexibility. If this is demonstrated, then it was hoped progress would be made. Clarification was sought on what was meant by 'flexibility' or if there would be a delay. It was confirmed that there would be no delay and that flexibility would be offered on the size of portfolios submitted.

A Council member stated that it was important schools move to the new levels of progression and that support was available for all schools in the implementation of these. He commended the way in which the case had been put forward.

- *SEN Project and Qualifications Provision* :the committee received two presentations from practitioners on the SEN projects underway in their schools. Members commended their approach.

Qualifications provision : an update on progress against each recommendation was provided.

- The Committee received a presentation on the *New Qualification in Software & Systems Development*. It was recognised that focussed training on ICT was required for all teachers.

Updates were also provided on :

- Accreditation of Entitlement Framework Specifications
- OfQual Consultation on GCE Reform
- 14-19 Communication and Application of Number Developments
- Cross-Curricular Skills
- GCE/GCSE Awarding Issues
- Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications

Clarification was sought on how training would be provided for teachers on the new qualifications for the Entitlement Framework. The DoQ confirmed there was a need for extensive training and that officers would be working with a wide range of organisations to see how they can assist and support CCEA in the provision of good quality training materials.

Statutory Assessment Update

Computer Based Assessment

The Interim Chief Executive reported that over the last number of weeks a number of primary schools had advised CCEA they were experiencing technical difficulties when completing the Computer Based Assessments in Literacy and Numeracy. He outlined some of the causes which have led to schools experiencing technical problems.

He confirmed that to date approximately 60,000 children (out of approximately 80,000) had completed assessments in Literacy and Numeracy.

Members expressed concern at the adverse publicity CCEA had been experiencing and sought clarification on whether press releases had been issued explaining the nature of the problems. It was confirmed that media handling was on-going until the exact nature of the problem had been identified.

There was also the need to rebuild confidence in the system on the use of the new tools.

A Council member commended the work of teachers for the work undertaken to get the children through the assessments given the problems encountered.

8 Audit

Audit & Risk Committee Report : 4 October 2012

The minutes were tabled for members' information.

In the absence of the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr John Wilkinson reported on the following :

- *Non-compliance with purchasing arrangements*: there was a decrease in instances from April to August 2012.
- No significant issues to report on *Single tender actions and expenditure on unapproved venues*.
- *Annual Report and Accounts*: an unqualified Audit Certificate and Report was received from the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Information was provided on :

- Current issues for audit, risk and corporate governance;
- The quarterly assurance statement 1 April – 30 June 2012;
- The quarterly review of the Corporate Risk Register;
- The Revised Internal Audit Plan- the plan was approved.
- Examination Errors Enquiry Form – 3rd quarterly report was approved.
- *NIAO*: reported on the actions taken on the '*irregularity of expenditure on insurance*' and the reasons for '*expenditure incurred without contract*'. Satisfactory explanations were provided.
- *DE*: Fraud briefing notes were being developed to assist ALBs in tackling fraud.
- *Review of standards – GCE A Level Geography* :the findings from the awarding bodies standard review (2001 and 2010) in relation to the CCEA geography specification were being considered and would be reported back to a future meeting.
- *DE investigation into CCEA GCE Maths and Further Maths* : progress against actions arising from the two reports was provided.
- *QPP Audit Recommendations* : progress on the recommendations was reported. A follow up review would take place in November 2012.

A Committee member raised the issue of CCEA Awarding Body and CCEA the Regulator and how they sit together. The Interim Chief Executive explained that it was important to understand CCEA is the Regulator of Qualifications. This has been delegated to CCEA. He agreed that the two distinct functions needed to be presented to the public in a clear, meaningful way. This would be managed going forward.

Clarification was sought on whether all invigilators have Access NI. It was confirmed that DE will be issuing a circular to Heads of Centres stating they are responsible for all access arrangements for children.

The DoQ said that this could have an impact on the number of invigilators and if so the risk around this will have to be reviewed.

9 Regulation

The Chairperson welcomed the Regulation & Accreditation Manager to the meeting.

***Awarding Organisation Contacts with Centres in Northern Ireland* C/103/3**

The Regulation & Accreditation Manager (R&A) outlined the background to the issue and gave an overview on the proposed protocol CCEA should follow. He advised that the draft proposal had been discussed and agreed by the Education Committee (10 October) to come forward to Council for final consideration.

A Council member suggested that officers responsible for meetings should not be involved in question setting.

Subject to the following inclusion, the proposals were approved.

***GCSE English Final Report* C/103/4**

The R&A Manager confirmed that the report had been accepted in full by the Minister. Members noted the response from DE and comments on the recommendations which were now being taken forward. He commended Ms M Corrigan for the significant amount of work carried out in drafting the report.

The DoQ wished to place on record that there were no issues with CCEA's award. The problem identified was a change in grade boundary from the January 2012 series to the May 2012 series. She confirmed that CCEA did not have a January 2012 award.

Members sought clarification on how grade boundaries were determined and suggested that aspects of the process might be included in the Review of Qualifications. It was acknowledged that awarding is a highly technical and often complex process.

10 Any Other Business

None identified.

11 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as **Tuesday 18 December 2012** at 10.00 am.

The Chairperson thanked members and officers for their contributions to the meeting.

