

COUNCIL

Minutes of the one hundred and sixth meeting of Council held on Wednesday 26 June 2013 at 10.00 am in Room 115, CCEA HQ, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present : Mr T Carson (Chairman) Mrs H McClenaghan
Mr D Thompson Mrs D Black
Mr M Donnelly Mrs J Mussen
Mr J Wilkinson Dr P Cunningham
Mr E Cullen Mr R Thompson
Mrs C Harpur Ms M Crilly
Mrs R Cowan

Mr M Quinn (Director, Corporate Services)
Ms AM Duffy (Director, Qualifications)
Miss R Kennedy (Business Manager, Curriculum & Assessment)
Mr R McCune (Regulation & Accreditation Manager)
Mr J Daly (Financial Services Manager)
Ms M Corrigan (Project Manager, Review of Qualifications – Item 6 only)

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

1 Apologies

An apology was received from Mr J Clarke.

2 Chair's Business

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and advised that Miss M Corrigan would be present for Item 6 : Draft Report on the Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications.

Award of OBE

The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Mr John Wilkinson on his recent award of OBE.

FOI Requests

Members noted the most recent FOI requests.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 March 2013

Subject to a minor amendment on page 4, the minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Mr Robert Thompson and seconded by Mrs Christine Harpur as a true and accurate record. A copy was signed by the Chairman.

Action Points

Members noted the status of the Action Points.

Item 6 : Draft Corporate Plan 2013-15 : The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) confirmed that feedback from DE had been taken on board. A revised draft would be

considered at the Finance Committee at its meeting on 4 July. Subject to approval, the final document will be issued to Council for ratification before 31 July 2013.

4 Correspondence

Members noted the correspondence in relation to :

- *Response to CCEA's Second Interim Report : Review of GCSEs and A Levels (ltr from D Hughes to R Hanna : 15 April 2013).*
- *CCEA Corporate and Business Planning (ltr from K Godfrey to R Hanna : 14 May 2013).*
- *Request for CCEA's Internal Audit Annual Plan and Internal Audit Reports (ltr from D Heaney to R Hanna : 24 May 2013)*
- *Gateway Review on Computer Based Assessment (ltr from P Sweeney to T Carson : 29 May 2013)* this was in response to a letter issued by the Chairman on 19 April (previously circulated to Council).

5 Governance and Accountability

Accountability Review Meeting : 30 April 2013

The minutes of the Accountability Review meeting held on 30 April 2013 were provided for members' information.

6 Regulation

Review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications : Final Draft Report

C/106/1

The Interim Chief Executive reminded members of the commission from the Minister to carry out a fundamental review of GCSE and A Level Qualifications.

Extensive consultation had been carried out with a broad range of stakeholders which included the establishment of an Expert Group.

He confirmed that interim reports had been submitted (on schedule) on 31 January and 31 March 2013.

Following discussion on a range of issues, members commended the report and were content that the recommendations reflected the need for qualifications to :

- Be fit for purpose;
- Retain the brand names (GCSE and A Level) at this time : as they are widely recognised as quality qualifications.

There was also a need for a range of vocational courses to be developed so that young people can access qualifications best suited to their abilities.

The Interim Chief Executive advised that reference has been made to the broader context of an assessment framework across the system, that is, ensuring that all elements (including qualifications) have a clear and stated purpose and that all of the elements : exams, end of

key stage assessments are aligned with each other and other policies including accountability/target setting/school improvement.

Members welcomed the recommendation which suggested a review be carried out on the broader assessment framework rather than reviewing individual components separately.

Council wished to place on record their thanks and appreciation to the team and other members of staff included in the project. The Regulation & Accreditation Manager paid tribute to the Project Manager and the members of the team for the significant amount of work completed during a very challenging timeframe. The Interim Chief Executive and Chairman added their thanks.

The Regulation & Accreditation Manager also paid tribute to the input from the Expert Group who provided significant contribution to and debate around the main issues. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed he would write to the Expert Group thanking them for their commitment during the project. It was hoped that CCEA would be able to draw upon this expertise in the future.

Council **formally approved** the report.

7 Education

Education Committee Report :22 May 2013

The Chair of the Education Committee advised the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2013 had been circulated for members' information.

The main issues discussed were :

- *Interim Report on SEN Project* :members were satisfied with the work completed to date. The final report is due in the Autumn term.
- *Computer Based Assessment* : A detailed assessment paper which provided background on the work CCEA has completed and advice provided to DE on Assessment over the past 10 years. Members also discussed the Minister's statement and issues arising.

Work continues on the literacy and numeracy assessments and further updates will come forward to the committee as appropriate.

Updates were provided on :

- SEN Qualifications Provision
- Support for the Entitlement Framework
- Regulatory Statistical Bulletin
- Assessment of Cross Curricular Skills

Members noted the information provided.

The Chairman wished to place on record his thanks to Mrs McClenaghan for chairing the Education Committee and for guiding members through the many issues debated by the committee.

Members noted the information provided in paper **C/106/2**.

Computer Based Assessment

The Curriculum and Assessment Manager provided an update following the Minister's Statement of 21 May 2013 and gave an overview of the main issues arising, in particular, assessments which were to be mandatory in the autumn term 2013 is no longer the case. This would now run as a pilot. To date over 200 schools have expressed an interest in participating in the pilot this autumn. All details have been provided to C2K so that the readiness of these schools can be monitored.

She advised a remaining concern was the risks associated with the transformation of schools throughout 2013/14. In particular, the changing nature of ICT provision during the period of the proposed pilot.

The Chair confirmed that following the concern expressed at the last Council meeting, he and the Interim Chief Executive had discussed the issues with the Permanent Secretary at the GAR meeting held on 30 April 2013.

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that an analysis would be carried out on the risks of running a pilot and a report would be provided to DE by 31 July 2013.

Members welcomed this development and were content with the actions CCEA proposed to take. Clarification was sought on whether CCEA had the necessary expertise to conduct the analysis. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed this was the case, however, indicated for those aspects of delivery outside CCEA's control (ie the C2K Managed Service). CCEA would seek assurances from C2K about the state of readiness of the platform on an ongoing basis.

End of Key Stage Assessment

The Education Strategy Manager drew attention to paper **C/106/2**: an update on the arrangements for end of key stage assessment.

A discussion paper (previously circulated to Council) was provided to DE in April 2013 which outlined operational and broader issues have been raised throughout the consultation and evaluation events with teachers and principals.

She advised that the Minister had asked for a comprehensive report on how the arrangements were operating together with an analysis on the issues identified by schools by 31 July 2013.

A further evaluation of the first year of the new assessment arrangements using the Levels of Progression and associated moderation arrangements (from September 2012 to June 2013) was coming to a close and feedback from this and other evaluations would form the report to the minister.

The main issues identified to date were :

- Timescales for the submission of Levels of Progression;
- Pupils being assessed too early in academic year;
- Increased workload;

- Use of end of key stage assessment data is inappropriate and should not be used;
- Parents do not understand the new Levels of Progression

Following discussion on the range of issues raised, members welcomed the need to review policy for curriculum, assessment and qualifications together.

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that a number of issues raised during the evaluations have been included in the Introduction of Review of Qualifications Report as it was felt these were important.

It was agreed that Council members would be invited to future consultation events and the presentation given to principals circulated following the meeting.

8 Finance and Planning

Finance Committee Report : 1 May 2013

The Chairman of the Committee gave the following update :

- *Interim Finance Report as at 31 March 2013* :The interim year-end financial position was £145K (at this time) underspent against budget. (0.7% was within DE's 1% tolerance limit).
- *Initial Budget Allocation 2013/14* :members were concerned about the partial allocation of budget. The Interim Chief Executive has written to DE several times and the Chairman met the with Assistant Secretary to progress the matter.
- *Draft Corporate Plan 2013-15* :the first draft of the corporate was discussion and comments made. A final draft, following feedback from DE, will be discussed at the July meeting of Finance Committee.

Members were updated on the range of CoPE activity underway and 1 Business Case was approved by the Committee.

Year End Finance Report as at 31 March 2013

C/106/3

The Finance Manager (FM)drew attention to paper C/106/3 and confirmed an overall underspend of £110K at year end. This was within the 1% target set by DE. (This included the £90K allocated late in 2012 for funding a smoke extraction system).

Significant steps had been taken by management to focus on the main underspends identified in December 2012.

The Chairman, on behalf of Council, commended the Management Board, the FM and his team for the amount of work completed to bring the budget well within the DE target.

Qualifications TechnologyRoadmap

The FM confirmed that following feedback from DE's economic appraisal unit, revised Business Cases were submitted to DE on 14 June 2013. It was hoped that this would now move quickly to DfP. The Chairman asked for representations to continue to be made until a response has been received.

Members noted the information provided.

9 Audit

Audit Committee Reports : 17, 29 April and 12 June 2013

The Chairman of the Committee welcomed the new members of Council onto the Audit & Risk Committee.

Minutes for the three meetings were provided for members' information.

Report of Audit & Risk Committee Meeting : 17 April 2013

Updates were provided on :

- Non-compliance with CCEA's purchasing arrangements (Nov 12 – Jan 13) :members noted a reduction on instances compared to this time last year.
- Single Tender Actions
- National Fraud Initiative
- NIAO : the committee received an update on the NIAO external audit strategy
- Regulatory Statistical Bulletin : improvement actions were noted

Main issues discussed :

- *Quarterly Assurance Statement* : a new risk had been added to the Corporate Risk Register : *'Failure in delivery of products, services or systems as a result of dependencies on third party providers'*.
- *Data Protection* : a report was given on a recent investigation carried out and actions taken to address risks identified.
- *Internal Audit Activity* : an additional review of Computer Based Assessment (CBA) and audit reviews on Financial Systems and Purchasing and Procurement have been completed. The Annual Assurance Report has now been received.

Members noted the Scrutiny Report findings and approved the action plan on the CCEA Mathematics 2011/12 Examinations.

Report of Audit & Risk Committee Meeting : 29 April 2013

This was a special meeting convened to close out the Action Plan on the Mathematics issue, approval of the Annual Governance Statement and Corporate Risk Register.

Report of Audit & Risk Committee Meeting : 12 June 2013

Updates were provided on :

- Non-compliance with CCEA's purchasing arrangements (Feb – March 13) :members noted a decrease of instances on non-compliance within the ICT team.
- Single Tender Actions
- Fraud Incident

- External Audit (including draft report on Those Charged with Governance)
- Internal Audit Activity (including draft Annual Assurance Report)
- Computer Based Assessment

It was also confirmed that PWC would recommend that CCEA's financial statements are certified with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification. This was commended by members.

Main issues discussed :

- *Findings of the GCSE English Scrutiny Report* : an action plan would be presented to a future meeting of the committee.

The action plan to ensure operational readiness for the summer 2013 examinations was discussed and the committee approved the Statement of Compliance and Self-Evaluation Summary for General Conditions of Recognition.

The Chairman of the Committee advised that in terms of the internal audits carried out CCEA had received 2 or 3 examples of 'Satisfactory' ratings.

The Chairman, on behalf of Council, wished to commend the Interim Chief Executive, his management team and officers involved for the work on going throughout the organisation and results achieved.

The DoCS advised the contract with ASM has concluded and wished to place on record his thanks to them for their professionalism on all aspects of the work carried out. A process is underway to procure Internal Audit services moving forward.

The DoQ confirmed that the last timetabled examination took place on 25 June. No significant issues have been identified.

The Chairman wished to place on record his thanks to the DoQ and her team.

Procurement

The FM confirmed a significant improvement in relationship with CPD and reported on the range of CoPE activity currently underway and contracts pending.

Members were content with progress to date.

Draft 2012/13 Annual Report and Accounts

C/106/5

The FM confirmed an unqualified set of accounts.

He assured members that the process had been followed and all deadlines met and feedback from DE taken into account. He confirmed the draft report had been approved by the Audit & Risk Committee and was now coming forward to Council for final ratification.

Following discussion and clarification members **formally** approved the Annual Report and Accounts for 2012/13.

It was confirmed the document will be laid before the Assembly before 5 July 2013.

The Chairman commended those officers involved in the production of a useful and informative document.

10 Schedule of Council and Committee Meetings 2013/14

C/106/6

Members noted the dates of the Council and Committee meetings from September 2013 to June 2014 as confirmed.

11 Any Other Business

The Chairman commended the work carried out by CCEA officers to ensure contingency plans were put in place for the smooth running of examinations during the G8 Summit in Enniskillen. He congratulated the Interim Chief Executive and DoQ for their diligence and asked that Councils' thanks be passed to the teams involved.

Corporate Plan

Members agreed that subject to approval at the July meeting of Finance Committee, the Corporate Plan would be issued via e-mail to Council for final sign-off to meet DE's deadline of 29 July 2013.

12 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed for Wednesday 11 September 2013 at 10.00 am. The focus will be on the Summer 2013 Examinations Series.