

## **COUNCIL**

Minutes of the one hundred and twenty-eighth meeting of Council held on Wednesday 28 March 2018 at 10 am in Room 115, CCEA, 29 Clarendon Road, Belfast, BT1 3BG.

**Present :** Mr T Carson (Chair) Dr A Kerr  
Mrs R Cowan Mrs K O'Hare  
Mr B Wilson Dr N Morton  
Mrs C Harpur Mr R Thompson  
Mrs C Fitzsimons

Mr J Edwards (Chief Executive)  
Mrs L Scott (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)  
Mr R McCune (Head of Regulation)  
Ms A Swann (Business Manager, Qualifications – For Papers C/128/1B and C/128/2)  
Ms R Kennedy (Business Manager, Education Strategy – For Paper C/128/128/3)  
Mr J Daly (Financial Services Manager – Items 9 - 13)

Mrs P Bowden (PA to Chief Executive)

### **Introduction**

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting.

#### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr Cormac McKinney and Dr Les Caul.

#### **2 Conflict of Interests**

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

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

##### *Council Resignations*

The Chair informed members that he had received 3 resignations from Council members. He outlined that all were for personal reasons. Members resigning were Angela Whiteside, Tom Armstrong and Alison McCrudden, with immediate effect.

The Chair outlined that he had raised the matter with Department of Education (DE), highlighting the impact of pressure on CCEA's governance arrangements. DE had responded it was unlikely vacancies would be filled until the next rotation in 2021. DE advised a recruitment process would commence in the interim and any successful applicants would be subject to ministerial approval before they could be appointed.

##### *Key Stage 2 Appeal Hearing*

The Chair thanked the relevant Council members for their respective participation in the recent Stage 2 Appeal Hearing. He encouraged other Council members to undertake the appeals hearing training.

## *Chair's Report*

The Chair provided members with a broad overview of his activities and events that he had attended since the last Council meeting. In particular, his regular meetings with the Chief Executive and a recent meeting with the Board of Qualifications Wales and that it was mutually beneficial to share knowledge and understanding in regards to regulatory activities.

This concluded the Chair's report.

## *Chief Executive's Report*

The Chief Executive updated members on the following activity since the last meeting:

- CCEA continues to provide a programme of support in relation to the cross-curricular skills (CCS). Given the current context regarding industrial action, the focus of CCEA support is focused on effective practice, including the use of the Levels of Progression to support pupil progression, formative assessment and feedback. Industrial action is continuing to have a negative impact on system engagement with assessment arrangements.
- CCEA has offered modules through the Education Authority (EA) Shared Education programme. The topics for each module were specified by EA as areas that schools had identified as being in need of additional support. CCEA will continue to support and engage with this programme. However, it is noted the engagement in Primary modules has been stronger than in post-primary modules.
- Detailed curriculum updates have been provided to Education Committee. Council members have been provided with a summary of the update.
- Examinations January 2018: All question papers were provided error-free. All examination papers were accounted for and marked to agreed deadlines. Review of marking and awarding meetings operated to schedule. Results were issued to candidates on 8 March 2018 with no issues identified.
- Examinations March 2018: This was a legacy series of single and double award science examination papers. This was the first series that awarded notional C\*. All question papers were provided error-free. Marking was completed and review of marking and awarding meetings commenced on 22 March 2018.
- Examinations Summer 2018: Examinations papers are either being quality assured or are in final print. Provisional GCSE entry data suggest increases in the number of cash-ins for Mathematics, Physical Education, Religious Studies, Double Award Science, Single Award Science and Spanish. GCE entries (provisional data) have increased slightly.
- The internal and external review of English Literature (GCSE and Revised GCE) are now complete and have been issued for Council.
- CCEA has held a range of successful external events, which Council members attended. The Chief Executive thanked Council members for their attendance and support. These events included:
  - True Colours Exhibition;
  - Problem Solving Mathematics; and
  - Primary Curriculum Conference.

- The new GCSE specifications were introduced for first teaching in September 2017 with first awards on the revised (A\* to G) grade scale in Summer 2019. The revised GCSE English Language and GCSE Mathematics include opportunities for the assessment and reporting of achievement in Functional English and Mathematics respectively. We have agreed with DE officials (and with ETI) that the first two years of awarding (2019/20) will be viewed as a development period. Here we will be looking to review whether overall GCSE (Grade) achievement is in line (or otherwise) with the Level of performance in Functionality. We continue to meet with DE, Department for the Economy (DfE) and Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) colleagues on a regular basis.
- With the first awards of the revised CCEA GCSE qualifications (Summer 2019), the revised letter grade scale will be introduced. CCEA has issued a video for learners and their parents/guardians. According to social media metrics, the video has had a high number of views and has been well received.
- Work with Ofqual and Qualifications Wales (QW) is underway to ensure that, in this period of transition, we continue to maintain comparability with GCSE and A/AS Levels qualifications taken by learners in England and Wales. The main challenge, in Summer 2018, will be the introduction of number (9 to 1) grades for most of the GCSEs awarded in England. This challenge extends to reporting of results. The three regulators are working with the five JCQ awarding organisations.
- CCEA, as regulator, has initiated a review of the circumstances by which teachers have access to, and/or write, examination questions and other confidential materials. Ofqual is undertaking a similar review subsequent to a small number of reports in the media last summer about breaches of confidentiality by teachers in England. While there is no suggestion that malpractice of this nature is widespread, there have been incidents in the past with both Awarding Organisations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The Chief Executive noted Ofqual's decision to impose a regulatory fine on OCR, following breaches of fifteen conditions of recognition concerning controlled assessment in GCSE Computer Science during 2016 and 2017.

This concluded the Chief Executive's report.

#### *FOI Requests*

Members noted the most recent FOI requests.

#### **4 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 December 2017**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 December 2017 were proposed by Ms Carol Fitzsimons and seconded by Mrs Christine Harpur as a true and accurate record. The Chair signed the minutes of 13 December 2017.

A council member requested an update on progress with the Staff Survey.

The Chief Executive responded that the survey had closed and there had been a return rate of above 60%. The HR Manager was collating the data and producing a summary report for CCEA's management to consider. Management would be asked to respond, providing actions where necessary and that this would be presented to Council, via Finance Committee, in due course.

#### *Action points*

The Chair updated members on the actions as follows:

*Council members' invitation to primary conference:* Members had been invited and some were able to attend. This action was noted as completed.

*Consideration would be given to avoiding setting an examination on the first day term of the January examination series:* The Director of Education confirmed this had been considered in the discussions and consultation for timetabling for 2019 series. This action was noted as completed.

*Appeals training to be scheduled for Jan/Feb 2018:* The Chair recorded his thanks to those council members that had availed of the appeals training. Future sessions would be organisation for 2018/19. This action was noted as completed.

A member stated that he felt that appeals hearing training was useful and suggested it be adapted for the induction process for new Council members.

*Delivery planning, Exit from European Union (Brexit Day 1 Plan):* The Chief Executive informed members a response on CCEA's Brexit Day 1 planning would be issued to DE by 30 March 2018. A copy of the response would be included in correspondence for the next Council meeting.

A Council member sought clarity around the funding opportunities and activities that would be available to CCEA after implementation of Brexit. The Chief Executive advised that at this point the position was uncertain as clarity was required in regards to the UK's relationship with the European Commission and the Commission's education programmes.

A Council member suggested CCEA's Education Committee could consider what the impact of Brexit regulations could potentially have on the NI curriculum. It was agreed the Director of Education would include Brexit as a future agenda item for Education Committee.

*Council development day:* The Chair informed he would be discussing this with the Chief Executive and would revert with a potential date for a Council development day to discuss objectives and planning.

## **5 Correspondence**

The Chief Executive drew attention to the correspondence provided, in particular :

- the DE Delivery Planning for Day 1 Brexit. A response would issue to DE by 30 March 2018.

Members noted the information provided.

## **6 Governance and Accountability**

*Report of the Governance and Accountability Review (GAR) : 8 February 2018*

The Chair provided members with an update from the last GAR meeting which took place on 8 February 2018. He informed the minutes of the meeting were still to be agreed.

He outlined the main key discussion points from the GAR meeting. A Council member sought clarity in regards to whether the position on revising the NI Curriculum was addressed at the last GAR meeting. The Chair confirmed he would raise this at the next GAR meeting in June 2018.

## **7 Education**

*Education Committee Report : Meeting held on 24 January 2018*

The Chair of the Education Committee drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided and highlighted the main items discussed:

- *Review of Teachers as Examiners:* Further work was required in relation to the Review of Teachers as Examiners therefore it had been deferred until the next meeting of the Education Committee in May 2018.
- *CCEA Events:* A range of events have taken place : primary curriculum conference, a mathematics problem solving conference and a male underachievement symposium.
- *Status of the DfE/DE working group on 14-19 arrangements:* The Chair confirmed he would raise this item at the next GAR meeting.

This concluded the report from the Education Committee.

### **External Review**

**C/128/1A**

The Chairman welcomed Mr David Beck to the meeting. He reminded members that Council had commissioned an external independent review of GCSE and AS (Revised) English Literature following adverse media attention.

Mr Beck thanked CCEA officers and external parties for their respective contribution in providing assistance throughout the duration of the review. The findings and recommendations had been provided in paper C/128/1A.

He outlined the terms of reference for the review, summary of findings and recommendations. In conclusion, the concerns raised by candidates, about the variability of marking, and by schools, relating to the quality of information provided in advance of teaching of the revised AS specification for English Literature, in the main had merit. In particular, the quality of support materials for the revised AS specification and their timeliness of availability to schools was unhelpful.

Overall, the procedures and processes currently in place within the CCEA awarding body, for the marking of GCSE English Literature, were robust and conducted appropriately. The processes and procedures for the review of marking in GCSE and AS (Revised Specification) English Literature were robust and had been conducted appropriately.

Members discussed the summary of findings and the recommendations. The Chair assured members that CCEA's Management Team would consider the findings of the review and the recommendations. Subsequently, an action plan with timescales would be produced.

The Chief Executive thanked Mr Beck for his comprehensive external review. The Chair confirmed he would write to Mr Beck and other external providers to acknowledge their respective contributions to this important review.

A Council member noted that whilst all findings and recommendations were present, recommendation 8 was missing from the paper (C/128/1A). It was agreed that an amended paper, including recommendation 8, would be issued to those members in attendance at the meeting.

The adoption of the report and its recommendations were formally recommended by Mrs Christine Harpur and seconded by Mrs Kathleen O Hare, subject to Recommendation 8 being included in the amended paper.

## **Internal Review**

**C/128/1B**

The Chairman welcomed Ms Amanda Swann (Business Manager, Qualifications) and Miss Ruth Kennedy (Business Manager, CAR) to the meeting. He reminded members the Chief Executive had commissioned CCEA's awarding body to undertake an internal review of GCSE and AS (Revised) English Literature.

The Chair invited the Business Manager (Qualifications) to present the findings and recommendations from the internal review. She provided members with a broad outline of the review and its recommendations.

A Council member asked that further consideration be given to the actions proposed, particularly that they be more specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

A Council member asked if the recommendations from the external review would be combined with the recommendations from the internal review. The Director of Education confirmed that a mapping exercise would be undertaken and that a full action plan would be produced and reported at Education Committee.

Members noted the contents of the report.

Mrs Kathleen O'Hare left the meeting at this point.

## **November 2017 and January 2018 Examination Series**

**C/128/2**

The Director of Education provided members with a summary of the November 2017 and January 2018 examinations series. She provided this update:

- None of the risk identified prior to the series materialised;
- All question papers were error free;
- All examination papers were accounted for and marked to agreed deadlines;
- Review of marking and awarding meetings operated to schedule;
- Results were issued to centres on 10 January 2018 with no issues identified; and
- The enquiry about results process was now closed.

Members noted the position.

## **Curriculum Developments**

**C/128/3**

The Business Manager (CAR) provided the members with an update on CCEA's Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (CAR) activities. She highlighted it was a very broad overview of the CAR activities (the paper provides full detail).

Members noted the information provided.

## **8 Regulation**

### **Role of CCEA as Regulator**

**C/128/4**

The Head of Regulation reminded members of the importance to the work of regulation that structures are in place to ensure complete clarity on independence of the role of the Regulator in regards to decision making. He informed members the Regulators' role was to ensure 'comparability of standards for qualifications taken here with similar qualifications taken in other parts of the UK, therefore they work closely with the other qualifications regulators, Ofqual and Qualifications Wales.

Members noted the information provided in the paper.

### **Update: GCSE A\*-C Grading**

**C/128/5**

The Head of Regulation reminded members the GCSE Grading Communications Strategy was approved by Council. The purpose was to ensure key stakeholders were appraised fully in relation to the grading changes in order that public confidence was retained in GCSE awarding, particularly for CCEA GCSE qualifications.

He provided an outline of the work that was completed and the planning underway for the coming month:

- Stakeholder engagement (activities undertaken between October 2017 to January 2018);
- Survey results;
- Key messages from teachers/senior leadership team/parents/young people;
- Outputs from Phase 1; and
- Phase 2 (Implementation stage)

Members noted the information provided.

### **DfE Consultation: Technical Level (T-Levels) Qualifications**

**C/128/6**

The Head of Regulation informed it would not be normal practice for CCEA to provide input to DfE (England) (or Ofqual) consultations. However, given that T-Levels may become available to learners here, it was agreed that it would be appropriate to submit a response.

This response retrospectively approved for formal recording purposes. Proposed by Mrs R Cowan and seconded by Dr A Kerr.

## **9 Audit**

### *Audit Committee Report : Meeting held on 31 January 2018*

In the absence of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Dr A Kerr provided Council with an update from the meeting held on 31 January 2018. .

She drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided and highlighted the main items discussed:

- *Unauthorised purchases from September 2017 – December 2017:* Historic trend data for unauthorised purchases was provided to the ARAC members. Of over £2M payments to suppliers, there had only been one unauthorised purchase valued at £64.00. This highlighted a significant improvement since the previous quarter.
- *Reporting levels for unauthorised purchases:* The ARAC members agreed to adjust the thresholds of reporting to the committee of unauthorised purchases for over £1,500.00 only, not reporting instances below this threshold.
- *DACs:* During the reporting period September 2017 to December 2017, there were 8 direct awards in relation to general purchases totalling £58,863.14.
- Annual Report and Accounts (AR&A) anticipated timescales.
- 2017/18 PWC Audit Strategy process.

- *CCEA's Corporate Risk Register (CRR)*: was submitted to the Department of Education (DE) in July 2017.
- *PPEs*: All have been completed in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years.
- *Implementation of GDPR*: CCEA's plans for implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that would be effective from 25 May 2018.
- *Internal Audit Activity: Internal Audit Progress Report (AUD/37/7a)* and the follow-up reports on *Staff Performance Reviews (AUD/37/7b)* and *Moderators and Examiners (AUD/37/7c)*.
- DE, PWC and NIAO confirmed there were no updates to provide to the ARAC.

This concluded the Audit and Risk Assurance Report to Council.

### **Corporate Risk Register**

**C/128/7**

Mr R Thompson left the meeting at this point.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services informed CCEA's Corporate Risk Register (CRR) had been provided for members' information. She also informed the CRR had been submitted to DE in July 2017. Following their feedback, the register had been updated to ensure alignment to the DE risk categories.

She highlighted an additional risk that represented the ongoing proactive management of risks that CCEA adopts - CR9 'Failure to manage reputational risk and brand value'.

Members noted the information provided.

## **10 Finance**

### *Finance Committee Report : Meeting held on 28 February 2018*

The Chair of the Finance Committee drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided and highlighted the main items discussed:

*Budget allocation for 2018/19*: At the time, no recurrent budget allocation had been received from Department of Education and there was also no indication of funding level from Department for the Economy.

*Finance Report as at 31 January 2018*: DE had commissioned an internal monitoring round with a response deadline of 23 November 2017. A bid for £102K in non-cash (depreciation) was submitted and approval for an additional £23K non-cash was received. This left a shortfall of £89K. £195K had been released back to the Department of Education (DE). This was due to delays in recruitment and additional examinations income. An underspend of £149K (1%) against DE funded expenditure was reported to the committee. However, this was within the DE tolerance limit of 1%. Capital expenditure remained on track at this time. The Finance Manager confirmed that based on available information, it was predicted that budget would remain on target at year-end.

*Review of Invigilation Rates of Pay*: Further work was required to revise the scheme of rates for invigilation fees to ensure they were fit for purpose.



*Annual Theft and Fraud Report 2016/17:* Members reviewed the Annual Theft and Fraud Report. There were no instances of fraud to report during the 2017/18 year to date.

*Public Sector Shared Services Programme (PSSSP) Update:* CCEA had been invited to a meeting to discuss the draft outline business case for wider shared services. An outline business case was now expected by June 2018. There may be opportunities for CCEA to share its services into the wider programme, in particular, Irish Medium; Digital Services and Assessment Arrangements.

*Staff Survey 2018:* the staff survey had been launched on 28 February 2018 with a closing date of 16 March 2018.

*External ISO Audit Report:* An ISO surveillance visit took place in January 2018 across the 3 standards of ISO9001; ISO14001 and OHSAS18001.

*Business Cases:* 29 Business Cases were approved between November 2017 and January 2018.

*General update:* Fire and Rescue Service had carried out an inspection and CCEA was compliant with their requirements.

The Chair thanked all of the Chairs of the Committees and the feedback that they respectively provide to Council, with a particular acknowledgment to Dr A Kerr who provided an ARAC update in the absence of the Chair of the ARAC.

#### ***Finance Report as at 31 January 2018***

***C/128/8***

The Finance Manager informed the members, as the current financial position predicts that CCEA was within the 1% tolerance target.

He provided members with a summary of the financial position and the main issues as provided in the detail of the paper.

Members noted the financial position reported.

#### ***Statement of Financial Position as at 31 January 2018***

***C/128/9***

The Finance Manager advised members this paper had been considered by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 28 February 2018. The paper provided an assurance to Council members in relation to the financial position of CCEA's assets and liabilities as disclosed in the Statement of Financial Position as at 31 January 2018.

Members noted the information provided.

#### ***Management Statement/Financial Memorandum (MSFM)***

***C/128/10***

The Chair advised members that in-line with an audit recommendation, the MSFM had been issued to Council on an annual basis. The Financial Memorandum had been tabled for members' information.

A Council member asked when the next review of the MSFM would take place. The Chair confirmed it was anticipated during 2019/20. The Chair noted that the MSFM was a Department of Education document and that any review would be commissioned by them. The Chair proposed the Director of Finance and Corporate Services would establish and lead a working-group, to include council members, to review the MSFM and prepare for engagement with Department of Education on the review of MSFM when commissioned.

## ***Planning and Performance***

### ***Operational Plan 2107/2018: Monitoring Report: Quarter 3 (By Exception)***

***C/128/11***

The Director of Corporate Services provided a report, by exception, for the completed third quarter (October-December 2017).

Members noted the information provided.

### ***DE Draft Business Plan 2018/19***

***C/128/12***

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services outlined the DE process for submission of CCEA's draft business plan for 2018/2019. Subsequent to DE feedback, a revised version of the CCEA draft business plan had been re-submitted to DE for consideration.

A Council member asked if the educational outcomes within the business plan had been aligned to the appropriate targets within the draft Programme of Government (PfG). The Council member highlighted that further reference, to a range of PfG indicators, would be useful for the organisation and would demonstrate the strategic value of the educational work. The Chief Executive said the organisation would give consideration to the PfG educational outcomes against CCEA's draft business plan and make amendments accordingly.

### ***2018/19 Budget Allocation***

***C/128/13***

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided members with an update on the position with the 2018-19 budget allocation.

- CCEA had received its 2018/19 recurrent budget allocation;
- General recurrent (Revenue) was identical to the 2017/18 opening allocation;
- Non-cash was slightly higher than the 2017/18 opening allocation; and
- No capital allocation had been received to date.

Members noted the budget allocation information.

### ***External Audit Report***

***C/128/14***

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services reported on the ISO framework following the January 2018 ISO surveillance visit. The ISO assessor had met with various teams across the organisation over a 3-day surveillance visit. She reported that CCEA had complied with the ISO standards.

A pre-surveillance visit had been scheduled for 18 June 2018 to assess the readiness of CCEA for the transition to ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. The assessment to ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 was planned for 10-12 September 2018.

Members noted the information provided.

### ***VES Update 2017/18***

***C/128/15***

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services informed members CCEA had initiated a Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) in December 2017. CCEA was allocated funds from the Public Sector Transformation Fund (PSTF) to facilitate the 2017/18 VES. In total 10 individual staff were offered VES, 9 accepted and

1 declined. A total of 8 individuals would exit the organisation under VES, representing 6.44 FTE with a total cost of £452,330.

Members noted the information provided.

## **11 Any Other Business**

A Council member sought clarification on the recommendations from the external review, in particular, whether consideration had been given to any budget increase in regards to the examiner rates of pay for English Literature examiners. The Director of Education outlined that this would be considered as one of the recommendations adopted by Council.

A Council member sought clarification on the position in relation to the Catering contract. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services confirmed there would be an extension to the catering contract for a further 2 years.

## **12 Dates of Future Meeting and Draft Schedule from September 2018 to December 2019**

**C128/16**

The Chair reminded members the next scheduled meeting was 20 June 2018.

The draft schedule of meetings was ratified by the members.

This concluded the meeting.