

## **Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment**

### **Council**

Minutes of the fifty-ninth meeting of Council, held at 2.15 pm on Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 September 2005 in the Radisson Hotel, Letterkenny.

#### **Present**

Dr A Murray (vice-chair)	Mr B Carlin
Mr D McKee	Mrs D Black
Mr J Clarke (28 <sup>th</sup> )	Mrs P O'Farrell
Mr J Ellison	Mr D Thompson
Professor P Roebuck	

Mr D Woods, (DE Assessor)  
Mrs M Cree (DEL Assessor)

Mr G Boyd (Chief Executive)  
Mr D Mulholland (Director, Corporate Services)  
Mr N Anderson (Director, Operations)  
Mr R Hanna (e-Learning Development Manager)  
Mrs K Gribbon (Marketing & Communications Manager) for Item 2 only  
Mr R McCune (Accreditation Manager) for Item 6 only  
Mrs J Scharf (Principal Officer) for Item 6 only  
Mr M Montgomery (Pupil Profile Manager) for Item 7 only

Miss N Kennedy, Manager, Council Secretariat

### **Introduction**

Dr Murray welcomed members to the meeting and advised that in the absence of Dr Lennon she would chair the meeting.

#### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Dr A Lennon; Mr J Collins; Mr B Turtle; Dr W Mulryne; Mr J Lee; Mrs H McClenaghan; Mrs M Watson, Mr D McCall; Mrs B O'Hare.

#### **2 Chairman's business**

The Deputy Chairperson drew members' attention to:

- The Council programme and agenda for the meeting. Sufficient time has been allocated for discussion of the main issues surrounding Regulation & Qualifications and Curriculum & Assessment.

The Deputy Chair informed members that several papers had been tabled and the following officers would be attending during the course of the meeting:

- Mr R McCune & Mrs J Scharf for item 6; and

- Mr M Montgomery for Item 7.

The following items were taken under Chair's business:

***Finance report and expenditure to end August 2005***

***C/59/1***

Mr Mulholland reported:

- Income : £331K ahead of target due to entries received being higher than estimated.
- Baseline expenditure : £651K overspent in the areas of examinations, assessment and assessment operations. This is due to the activities happening in advance of receiving income.
- Project expenditure : £301K underspent due to delay in project activity and recruitment.
- Capital expenditure : £14K underspent which is in line with projections at this time.

Monitoring of project expenditure continues to ensure projects are achievable. Managers have been asked to highlight any variances which need further investigation at the earliest possible stage to ensure accurate forecasting and bidding for 06/07.

Mr Carlin drew attention to the figures for income and asked that this be changed to show the true sense of the position as a positive rather than negative.

***2005/2006 Statutory Accounts and Timetable***

Mr Mulholland reported that despite CCEA adhering to the timetable put in place the statutory accounts were 4 weeks behind schedule due to:

- How we should account for grant income; and
- Minor queries from the audit office arising after the deadline had passed.

The accounts will be discussed in full at the Business Committee on 19 October and will come to Council for agreement on 21 December 2005.

***Issue of results 2005 – media management***

***C/59/2***

Mrs Gribbon reported on the issue of results and drew members' attention to the main headlines outlined in the paper. This year, as per Joint Council (JCQ) policy, the media were provided with the summary of results information on the day of the issue of results rather than 24 hours earlier. Initial feedback showed few benefits from taking this approach in terms of management and good relationships with the media.

The Chief Executive said we would be discussing CCEA's feedback with JCQ with a view to taking a different approach next year.

He reported on the publicity surrounding RSE resource material included in the 2001 guidelines. A meeting has been arranged with the interested parties to agree a suitable way forward.

Members were happy with the information provided.

### **3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 8 June 2005**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 June 2005 were approved by Council and a copy signed by the Vice-Chair.

#### ***Action points***

The majority of the action points had been dealt with or were on the agenda for today's meeting.

The Chief Executive reported that:

- copies of the letter on 'definition of courses' and 'understanding pupil profile a guide for parents' have been distributed;
- compulsory attendance at agreement trials is work in progress through the Regulation & Qualifications Committee;
- publication of results in Northern Ireland vs performance and non-performance: this will be progressed through the Curriculum & Assessment Committee.

Mr Clarke raised the issue of the number of committee meetings and asked for consideration to be given to running all day meetings or scheduling 2 committee meetings in one day. Mr McKee urged caution as depending on the topics for discussion, some morning meetings had been extended. The Chief Executive agreed to consider this for 2006/2007.

#### ***Reconstitution of Council***

Mr Ellison sought clarification on the reconstitution of the Council. Mr Woods confirmed that due to the RPA and the uncertainty of the timescales the Department of Education had decided to reconstitute the Council.

It was agreed that a copy of the letter be issued to all Council members and a further update be given at the next meeting on 16 November.

### **4 Review of Public Administration**

The Vice-Chair welcomed Mr Hanna to the meeting. Mr Hanna tabled the final published response which has been lodged with the RPA office. Copies have been sent to the Permanent Secretaries of DE and DEL. The final submission is the result of many meetings of CCEA officers and Council members and was subject to editorial prior to final printing. A copy would be posted on the CCEA website to coincide with the presentation at the Staff Conference on 29 September.

Mr Woods said that it is hoped that an announcement will be made in November 2005.

Mr McKee wished to place on record his thanks to officers, in particular Mr Hanna, for the substantial amount of work undertaken to produce a very comprehensive document which had the consensus of the Council.

Mr Mulholland reported that Deloitte had been asked to size and cost the current proposals. They have met with all of the education bodies and will finalise their report by 31

October. They have advised that enough scope and flexibility will be left to ensure it can be adapted in the light of forthcoming announcements.

## 5 Committees

*(a) Learning for Life and Work Sub-Committee : 7 September 2005*

In the absence of the Chairman, Dr Lennon, the Chief Executive reported that:

- a presentation updating members on the work undertaken since the last meeting was given, highlighting the issues arising and future plans for development;
- the Dungannon/Cookstown initiative was progressing well with a high degree of buy in from stakeholders;

the launch of the programme took place on Monday 26 September 2005 and was well supported.

- GCSE and GCE AS Learning for Life and Work specifications were reviewed and discussed by the committee.
- Careers provision: was discussed by the committee. A revised paper will be developed into a strategy which will influence the careers debate going forward.

Mrs Cree sought clarification on CCEA's role with regard to measurement. It was agreed that the paragraph would be redrafted to clarify the position as follows:

### *Measurement*

*The chairman said that in order to be able to make information-related policy decisions, clear measurements had to be put in place. He sought the committee's support for setting up a project to define and measure skills **in relation to obtaining more up to date and relevant literacy data on which to base firm and sound decisions regarding skills.** DE, DEL and DETI would be approached for funding to support this.*

## 6 Regulation and Qualifications Progress Report

**C/59/3**

The Vice-Chair welcomed Mr McCune and Mrs Scharf to the meeting.

The Chief Executive emphasised that this report was to make members aware of the progress made since the last meeting on a number of issues arising for full discussion by the regulation & Qualifications committee during 2005/06.

### *GCSE Specification Development : Mathematics and Science*

Mr McCune reported that as a result of the Smith Review of Mathematics (Making Mathematics Count), it was intended that the specification would move to a 2 tier structure by 2006 to ensure all candidates would have access to a Grade C. From September 70 centres will follow the new 2 tier specification. All centres will continue to have access to the 3 tier specification.

GCSE Science will be revised for 2006 to ensure the content of specification reflects the 21<sup>st</sup> century science. This has been limited to the single award subject as further work is required during 2005/06 on how best to revise double award.

Members made the following comments:

- The need for good communication setting out the reasons for changing the specifications;
- The need for more relevant and interesting specifications and rigorous marketing of same;
- The need to get the balance right between the science principles ensuring basic background knowledge as well as including relevant and interesting content.

#### *Framework for Achievement*

Mr McCune drew members' attention to the consultation report on the Framework for Achievement. Having received the Council's recommendations the Minister wrote outlining the need for further work and consideration to be given to:

- The need to ensure that the system is easy to understand and operate. That the framework will operate across England/Wales and Northern Ireland with links to credit developments in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.
- Building on the strengths of the current National Qualifications Framework and taking account of developments emerging from the European Qualifications Framework.
- Providing a mechanism to link with higher education developments and integrate with 14-19 developments.
- The need to clarify roles and responsibilities of the Sector Skills Councils and Awarding Bodies regarding combining rules for qualifications, a common databank for units and unique learner numbers.

The Minister also asked for a costing of the nature and scope of the infrastructure necessary to support this framework and ensure the funding arrangement will support a unit-based system.

Mrs Cree expressed concern that our Welsh counterparts had still not agreed to a 3 country approach. The Chief Executive confirmed that discussions were ongoing but felt confident that this will be resolved going forward.

Professor Roebuck welcomed the report and informed members that the further work will be progressed through the Regulation & Qualifications Committee.

#### *Post Qualifications Admissions*

Mr McCune said that the report, tabled for members' information would be discussed by the Regulation & Qualifications Committee at its meeting on 5 October and come forward to Council on 16 November.

Mr Ellison asked that the Council's response include clarification on the issue of modifying the start of the HE term.

Professor Roebuck agreed that this would be taken on board by the committee.

### *14-19 developments*

Mrs Scharf outlined the main developments arising out of the White Paper which have implications for Northern Ireland. Work has begun on considering the implications of :

- Specialised Diplomas;
- Functional Skills; and
- Advanced extension awards.

The question of making GCEs more difficult is a major issue which requires careful consideration and full debate going forward.

The Chief Executive expressed concern about this debate informed members that he had written to the Department of Education requesting clarification on a number of issues in the Northern Ireland context, in particular changing the shape of a levels, before proceeding. It was agreed that the letter would be circulated to Council members.

Mr Woods confirmed that a commissioning letter would be issued jointly by the Departments (DE and DEL) setting out clearly the issues which require further exploration in relation to the whole A level debate, including:

- Harder questions at GCE;
- The need for common currency to ensure our young people are not disadvantaged;
- Specialised diplomas and more breadth in the 6<sup>th</sup> form.

Mrs Cree said there was a need for a full programme of work to be drawn up by DE and DEL setting out the true scope of 14-19 issues.

Mr McCune informed members that copies of the Skills Strategy summary and responses were available for members to take away. Mrs Cree said it was hoped that DEL would issue an action plan based on the outcomes of the consultation in November 2006.

The Vice-Chair thanked Mrs Scharf and Mr McCune for their contributions to the meeting.

## **7 Curriculum and Assessment**

The Vice-Chair welcomed Mr Montgomery to the meeting.

### ***Curriculum Implementation: working with PMB***

***C/59/3***

The Chief Executive reported that following the last Council meeting a number of groups and seminars have been set up to progress issues. The paper :

- Reiterates and amplifies the risks associated with delivering the planned strategy taking into consideration the current financial constraints and the nature of the strategy; and
- Sets out mitigation measures and recommendations on a possible alternative strategy.

It is intended, pending Council approval, that this proposal is put to the Department of Education for consideration as a matter of urgency.

Mr Clarke congratulated Dr Murray on her rational, pragmatic and visionary response to the PMB proposals launched at the Stormont Hotel, Belfast, on 16 September.

Members asked that the Department of Education be requested to co-ordinate the implementation strategy, taking into consideration the need for:

- Urgent consideration to be given to adopting a different dissemination model as outlined in the paper.
- Appropriate and adequate responsibility and retraining/training to be given to schools in the light of the proposed rationalisation of expertise and resources currently available through the CASS service.
- Clarification of the current situation regarding implementation to be given to schools in a positive and consistent manner.
- Consideration to be given to mainstreaming of ICT provision and infrastructure to support the implementation of the new curriculum.
- Strong strategic leadership and joined up thinking; and RTU to have a pivotal role in the strategic thinking to ensure they raise awareness of teachers giving a consistent message.
- Cascading to be thought through and trialled before putting into operation to ensure it is delivered properly.
- Delivering consistent message through a variety of channels, including ICT; school development planning; training and PR.
- The inclusion of the role of HE in the professional development of teachers and how this ties into school development programmes. PQH and PQL to be included where relevant.

Mr Woods agreed that central direction was required for implementing the new curriculum changes. He welcomed the paper which highlighted a number of important issues which need to be thought through and acted upon, and said that there was possible scope for an alternative model, this would require a lot of negotiation with the all of the parties involved.

Members agreed that the proposals be put forward to the Department, taking account of the comments made. It was agreed that the Chief Executive would write to the Department setting out the proposals.

Members urged that these issues be dealt with as soon as possible to ensure successful implementation on time. The Chief Executive reiterated that CCEA had delivered everything they had been required to and were now dependent upon external partnerships to proceed with implementation/delivery.

***Curriculum Implementation : update on work in progress***

***C/59/5***

The Chief Executive drew attention to the activities outlined in the paper, and asked members to note the work in progress on preparation of materials to support implementation for primary and post primary curriculum changes.

Members noted the information provided.

***Update on the Annual Pupil Profile***

***C/59/6***

Mr Montgomery reported that following a meeting with DE on 18 August at which CCEA outlined proposals for pupil profile at Key Stages 1 & 2, the DE had responded on 24 August setting out its position, with further suggestions and modifications. He drew members' attention to the key points outlined in the paper.

Members discussed the issues in detail. Clarification was sought on:

- Part 2 of the report. It was confirmed that the additional information would be addressed in the first parent-teacher meeting conducted in September. This particular aspect of the process will be monitored closely during piloting and feedback given accordingly.
- Levels : the need to be clearer on what a level means if it is intended they become statutory and teachers have to defend them.
- Creating awareness and knowledge for parents and what basic core information will be available.

The following materials will be available going forward :

- An explanatory leaflet setting out what levels are and how they work for parents and teachers; as well as a leaflet for parents to accompany the report; and
- An awareness plan for parents' year on year will be developed in conjunction with DE.

Mr McKee commended the efforts made to involve parents at every stage.

The following comments were made for consideration:

- The replacement for the 11+ must be robust, fair and in the interest of the child. It must be promoted confidently by the teacher to the parent. To ensure this the teacher must be adequately trained and fully informed going forward.
- Caution to be used with the word 'expectation' regarding levels.
- Communications strategy: to be helpful, clear, concise, easily understood by all.
- Parents to be consulted in all aspects to ensure a full understanding of the pupil profile.

It was agreed that the issues and comments made, including a full update from the Communications Group would be taken on board and further developments reported back at the next meeting of Council.

***Costing options for technical delivery and support of pupil profile***

***C/59/7***

Mr Hanna drew members' attention to the tabled paper and reported that this was early work in progress. He outlined the 3 options.



### *Next steps*

It was agreed that the Department would look at Option 3

***Option 3: C2K/Capita provision*** – *Capita is currently part of the C2K core provision and ongoing product development may produce a product which satisfies some/all of CCEA's requirements. CCEA's needs do not have primacy in this development and match is likely to be coincidental rather than inevitable as the product being developed is intended for a generic market. The release of this module is due in Spring 2006.*

in terms of costs in the first instance for Key Stage 2, for providing reporting writing tool and for onscreen assessment to support this. It is important to obtain visibility of costs around the procurement or development of these tools to ensure we are aware of the total bill.

The following timescales were highlighted:

- Procurement to be finalised by December 2005
- Integration of report writing tools March 2006
- Trialling and testing June 2006.

The Chief Executive said that although CCEA had no responsibility for this, in order for the new curriculum to succeed it is critical we ensure it is delivered through ICT. The issues surrounding implementation and delivery have been raised through the e-Learning & Services Committee over the last 2 years and they now need to be addressed.

The Vice-Chair agreed that the points had been well made through e-Learning & Services and Council meetings. She stressed the importance of progressing these issues as a matter of urgency and asked for a further update as appropriate.

The Vice-Chair thanked Mr Hanna and Mr Montgomery for their contributions to the meeting.

### **Examinations series 2005**

The Vice-Chair welcomed Mr Quinn; Mrs Duffy; Mrs Gribbon and Mr Hamilton to the meeting.

### *Processing*

Mr Quinn gave a presentation on the processing of entries; issue of results; and enquiries upon results for the Summer 2005 examinations series. He wished to place on record that this year's operation ran very smoothly as a result of the various improvements that were put in place during 2004/2005.

### *Awarding*

Mrs Duffy gave a presentation on the key functions and technicalities of the awarding process. She highlighted the challenges for specifications development and developments in computer-aided awarding software going forward.

Members welcomed the good uptake on the early pilot of Learning for Life and Work qualification.

### *Market Share*

Mrs Gribbon gave a detailed presentation on the overall market share picture, what CCEA's targets were and what measures were being put in place to achieve this.

As total market will fall due to decreasing numbers of children, other means of securing market share needs to be looked at taking into consideration the wider market in UK and Internationally.

The target is for CCEA to be the Number 1 provider of choice in Northern Ireland. With currently 73% of the GCSE market and 63% of the GCE market it is intended to target all subjects, but focus on:

- Religious Studies;
- Modern Languages;
- English Literature; and
- Mathematics

The perception of CCEA being a Grammar School board remains a concern and will be addressed going forward with aggressive marketing strategies to target all schools to raise awareness of the full suite of examinations on offer for all schools.

Specifications are being revised to ensure the products are relevant, interesting and fit for purpose. The Chief Executive stressed the importance of getting the new specifications into schools at the earliest possible opportunity to help influence the decision makers choose the Awarding Bodies. He confirmed that we will be very proactive with this going forward.

Members were reminded that the SCORE concert takes place on Friday 15 October 2005.

The Vice-Chair and members thanked officers for their informative presentations and welcomed the updates in these areas.

### *EFQM*

Mr Hamilton gave a detailed presentation on the progress and improvements made on EFQM. He reported that we have entered for the UK Quality Award and are the only public sector body of the 8 finalists. A copy of the Feedback report was available for members to take away.

ISO1401 (Environmental Standard) has been introduced and work is underway.

Members congratulated Mr Hamilton on the submission and on reaching the final – a tremendous achievement.

Members said this should be looked at in terms of improving the organisation and not the winning of the award. It was important to keep improving going forward both in terms of business development and marketing the organisation.

#### *Vocational Qualifications & Key Stage Assessment – Summer 2005*

The Vice-Chair welcomed Mrs Doherty and Dr Sproule to the meeting.

#### *Key Stage Assessment and Vocational Qualifications*

Mrs Doherty gave a presentation on the assessment operations, highlighting :

- the increases to the qualifications portfolios, year on year;
- range of qualifications on offer;
- different types of assessment;
- essential skills qualifications; and
- success of occupational studies.

Dr Sproule gave a presentation outlining challenges and issues ahead for the vocationally related qualifications.

A Celebration of Achievement for essential and key skills event will take place at the end of October, this will be the first time this has been recognised.

Work continues in the area of Careers provision, and regular updates will be received arising from the Learning for Life and Work Committee.

Members welcomed the update on the developments within these areas.

The Vice-Chair thanked Mrs Doherty and Dr Sproule for their informative presentations.

Copies of all presentations are attached to inform the minutes.

### **8 Any other business**

None identified by the Secretariat.

### **9 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting was agreed as Wednesday 16 November 2005 at 1000 hours in the Boardroom, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, CCEA.

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CHAIRMAN

DATE \_\_\_\_\_