

## **COUNCIL**

Minutes of the one hundred and twenty first meeting of Council held on Wednesday 29 June 2016 at 10.00 am in Room 115, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, CCEA HQ, 29 Clarendon Road, Belfast, BT1 3BG.

**Present:**

Mr T Carson (Chair)	Mr J Wilkinson
Ms M Crilly	Mr M Donnelly
Mrs C Harpur	Mrs R Cowan
Dr L Caul	Mr R Thompson
Mr T Armstrong	Mrs J Mussen
Dr N Morton	

Mr J Edwards (Chief Executive)  
Ms AM Duffy (Director of Qualifications)  
Mr R Hanna (Director of Education Strategy)  
Mr J Daly (Financial Services Manager)  
Mr R McCune (Regulation & Accreditation Manager)

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

### **Introduction**

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting.

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Dr A Kerr; Mrs K O'Hare; Dr P Cunningham and Mrs S McClelland.

### **2 Declaration of Interests**

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

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

#### *Tabled Papers*

The Chair drew attention to the various papers tabled for members' information.

#### ***Chair's Report***

The Chair reported on a range of activities since the last meeting. These included :

- GAR Meeting held on 9 June 2016
- Meeting with the Minister at the Digital Skills Event on 23 June 2016

He also advised that a meeting would take place between NITC, the Chair and Chief Executive on 29 June 2016 to discuss matters of mutual interest

### *Council Training*

The Chair confirmed that Council training sessions had taken place on 16 May : Chairing Skills; and 23 & 24 June on Council Effectiveness. These were facilitated by CIPFA.

He asked members to put forward suggestions for consideration for the future Development Day programmes. The next Development session is scheduled for Wednesday 7 September 2016.

He confirmed that the 1-1 meetings with the Chief Executive continued to reflect progress against the work plan and risk register.

### *Meeting with Minister*

The Chair advised he had met the Minister at the CCEA Digital Skills event on 23 June and had requested a meeting to discuss a range of matters pertaining to Council business and the work of CCEA.

### *Appeals*

The Chair confirmed that four Stage Two appeal hearings had taken place with none upheld.

### *Remuneration Committee*

The Chair advised that where appropriate, a report on remuneration committee matters would be provided.

### *Committee Terms of Reference*

The Chair advised that in light of the formation of the Regulatory Advisory Committee it was timely to review Committee Terms of Reference, in particular the Education Committee. The Chief Executive and Chair of the Committee will review the document and issue to members in advance of the next Education Committee meeting.

It was confirmed that Chairs will carry out an effectiveness exercise on their committee, on an annual basis, to ensure the business is being debated and decisions are taken effectively.

### ***Chief Executive's Report***

The Chief Executive drew attention to the bullet point brief previously circulated and provided a brief overview in relation to :

### *Education Strategy*

- Assess and Progress website went live on 3 May 2016.
- CBA : assessments for 2015/16 were delivered with no errors. 20,100 assessments were completed during this time. 317 schools have registered to use the CBAs in 2016, 90 are new schools.

DE confirmed a business case is required for the extension of the current contract for NINA and NILA.

- CBA Futures : A report was issued to DE on 31 March 2016 for consideration.

#### *Qualifications*

The Summer Series timetable ended on 29 June. A small number of issues arose which require improvements to processes.

The Chief Executive assured members that currently no systemic or major faults in terms had been identified in regards to the summer series.

#### *Regulation*

- Revision of Specifications: the GCE/A Level Specifications programme is complete and new specifications will be available for first teaching in September 2016.
- The accreditation programme for GCSE specifications is on target.

CCEA has taken over regulatory responsibility for Technical and Professional Qualifications. The Regulation team is now appropriately resourced to accommodate the additional workload.

#### *Minister's Announcement : GCSE Grading*

The Chief Executive updated members on the Minister's decision to allow 9-1 graded English qualifications, regulated by Ofqual to be taken in Northern Ireland and outlined the exceptions relating to GCSE English and GCSE Science.

CCEA would also retain the A\* to G grading subject to the changes outlined in the statement.

He welcomed the early notification of the decision and confirmed that he would lead discussions on taking this work forward.

The Chair asked that the operational implications be worked through as soon as possible.

Member discussed and sought clarification on a number of matters, in particular :

- Impact for schools in relation to guided learning hours in respect of Professional & Technical Qualifications and schools ability to deliver
- Metrics applied to A\* to G and what they will be measured against
- Potential impact on CCEA's Market Share

In regards to Market Share, the Chief Executive said it was difficult to make a precise assessment of the impact at this time.

Clarification was sought on :

- Whether work had commenced on the development of the small up-take qualifications as directed by Minister O'Dowd.

The Chief Executive confirmed that in light of the new developments work has been suspended on the development of Polish, Classical Studies and Sociology, however GCSE Statistics would continue. He advised that a business case for the development of GCSE Statistics was being finalised.

- Whether Council were asked for informal advice in this area.

The Chair wished to place on record that Council were neither formally nor informally asked for advice on this matter. A request for technical information from DE was received and provided by CCEA.

The Chair confirmed that he and the Chief Executive were informed on 22 June that an announcement would be made by the Minister on the issue, however, no details were provided.

A Council member suggested that it would be important for CCEA to be well informed on matters pertaining to its business so that adequate provision could be made if advice is to be sought. The Chair confirmed he would raise this with the Minister once a meeting had been finalised.

- Changes to grade boundaries.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the decision may increase the enquiries upon results service. He assured members that these would be managed carefully. However, increases in enquiries over the longer term could impact public confidence. The Chief Executive also outlined the change could impact regulatory relationships with Wales, who would retain A\*-G grades and existing grade boundaries.

#### *UK decision to leave Europe and considerations for future CCEA business*

The Chief Executive reported that CCEA had a number of European Union funded projects underway. The European Qualifications Framework is also used to review comparability and transportability of qualifications across Europe.

He confirmed that until direction had been received CCEA would continue with business as usual.

The Chair asked for information on European projects, associated staff costs and potential implications for CCEA to be provided to him outside of the meeting.

#### *FOI Requests*

Members noted the most recent FOI requests.

#### **4 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 March 2016**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 March 2016 were proposed by Mrs Rosemary Cowan and seconded by Mr Martin Donnelly as a true and accurate record. A copy was signed by the Chair.

## *Action Points*

Members noted the status of the action points.

## ***Minutes of a special meeting held on 6 April 2016***

The Chair wished to place on record his thanks to members for their attendance.

The minutes of a special meeting held on 6 April 2016 were proposed by Mr John Wilkinson and seconded by Mr Robert Thompson as a true and accurate record. A copy was signed by the Chair.

## **5 Correspondence**

Members noted the following correspondence:

- Guidance for University Applicants
- 2016-17 Monitoring
- Circular to all DE Funded NDPBs : 2016/17 and 2017/18 Pay Remits
- DE Risk Management Framework and Corporate Risk Register 2016/17
- CCEA Business Plans 2015/16 and 2016/17
- Shared Education (Northern Ireland) Act 2016

### *Shared Education (Northern Ireland) Act 2016*

The Chief Executive drew attention to the correspondence from Ms K Godfrey regarding the Shared Education Act 2016 and advised of the implications for CCEA. He confirmed that CCEA would reflect the responsibilities the Act places on CCEA in the business plan and would take all relevant action to ensure these were fulfilled.

Members noted the information provided.

## **6 Governance and Accountability**

### *Governance and Accountability Review (GAR) Meeting : 9 June 2016*

The Chair advised that the agenda for the GAR meeting held on 9 June 2016 had been circulated to members. He provided an overview of the matters discussed, in particular the monitoring of the Corporate Risk Register and challenges in relation to the budget position.

He assured members the meeting had been conducted in a positive manner.

### *DE Changes*

The Chair confirmed that Mr Paul Sweeney would retire on 31 December 2016. Ms Katrina Godfrey would take up position of Director – Programme for Government from 4 July 2016. Ms Julie Thompson will take up post as Deputy Secretary, Education & Children's Service Policy during the summer months. The Chief Executive would seek a meeting in due course.

The Chair agreed to contact Katrina Godfrey to thank her for her support and advice to Council.

A copy of the letter was circulated to members for information.

## **7 Audit**

### ***Audit & Risk Assurance Committee Reports of Meetings held on : 13 April and 15 June 2016***

#### ***13 April 2016***

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee referred to the detail provided in the minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2016. He assured members that the committee had fulfilled its scrutiny and challenge function on all matters and reported on the following :

- Risk Assurance in Awards and Purchases December 2015 to February 2016 : one authorised purchase reported and no areas of concern on Direct Award Contracts.
- Annual Report & Accounts 2015/16 : members noted the timescales for completion and were content that the process was on target at this time.
- Draft Annual Governance Statement 2015/16 : members reviewed and recommended the document to Council for ratification.
- Corporate Risk Register 31 March 2016 : members were content that this was a positive reporting period and recommended the document to Council for ratification.
- DAO Draft Annual Theft & Fraud Report : members were provided with an assurance that no fraud had occurred in the organisation and no concerns reported.
- ASM Audit Reviews: members considered 2 reports (detail provided in minutes), and were satisfied with the ratings allocated.
- DE Update : members were made aware of two issues currently under scrutiny.
- Teacher/Examiner Risk : members were updated on the TNC issue and were content with the way in which the matter was being managed. Appropriate steps and measures have been put in place moving forwards.
- Qualifications : members noted the March 2016 series had been completed error free and were updated on the operational readiness for the Summer 2016 series.

#### ***15 June 2016***

The Chair of the Committee drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided. He reported on the following :

### *Closed Session (Internal Auditors)*

- The Committee met with ASM (internal auditors), as per good practice and discussed a range of related matters.

He wished to place on record that the feedback meeting held on **23 June 2016** with the Chief Executive was constructive and helpful.

### *Closed Session (Chief Executive)*

- The Committee met with the Chief Executive. Members sought and received assurances on the management of centres with challenging issues in the current examinations series.

### ***Main Meeting***

Updates and summaries were provided on:

- Risk Assurance in Awards and Purchases : March to April 2016 : one unauthorised purchase reported. In regards to Direct Award Contracts (DACs), the DE representative advised that multi-year contracts should be sought to mitigate against DACs.
- Draft Annual Report & Accounts 2015/16 : the documents were reviewed and recommended to Council for final approval.
- NIAO Report to those Charged with Governance : The PWC representative gave a detailed overview of the report and confirmed an Unqualified Opinion on CCEA's financial statements.

Members commended CCEA's performance and were satisfied with the Unqualified Opinion.

- Corporate Risk Register May 2016 : members were content with the information provided on this reporting period.
- ASM Audit Reviews: members considered 2 reports (detail provided in minutes), and were content with the ratings allocated.

The Annual Internal Audit Assurance Report confirmed an overall Satisfactory Assurance Rating for the Organisation.

The Chair of the Committee wished to place on record his thanks to outgoing members Ms Michele Crilly and Mr John Wilkinson for the substantial contributions they have made to the work of the Committee and for the robust challenge and scrutiny applied.

The Chair of Council, on behalf of members, congratulated the organisation on an excellent performance and thanked the FM and his team for the significant amount of work completed to achieve this position.

He endorsed the thanks of the Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee to Ms Crilly and Mr Wilkinson.

Members retrospectively and formally approved the Annual Governance Statement as at 31 March 2016.

**Corporate Risk Register : 31 March 2016**

Members retrospectively and formally approved the Corporate Risk Register : 31 March 2016.

The Chair advised that both documents had been issued to members for approval using the remote e-mail mechanism as the DE deadline for return was 6 May 2016. He confirmed that members approved the documents at this time.

## **8 Regulation**

*Regulatory Advisory Committee Report : meeting held on 27 April 2016*

The Chair advised that in the absence of Dr Robson Davidson, Chair of the Committee, Mrs Christine Harpur would give the report.

Mrs Harpur drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided and reported on the following :

- Committee Terms of Reference (ToR) : members reviewed the document. Changes have been made and will be circulated. Final ToR will issue to Council for information.
- Examining Qualifications for the Future : Norman Apsley, Chair of the Expert Group on Fundamental Review of Qualifications gave a detailed presentation on the interim report to the committee.
- GCSE Mathematics : Research Report : on Council agenda for further discussion at this meeting following committee recommendation to publish.
- Availability of GCSE Titles in Northern Ireland : members were content with the direction of travel taken to develop qualifications in a number of GCSE subjects.
- Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with OfQual : the committee raised a number of points for the Chief Executive to progress with OfQual as appropriate.
- CCEA Regulation Annual Report 2014/15 : members received the report for information. Moving forwards the committee will consider and recommend future reports to Council for approval as part of the Annual Governance Statement.

A regulatory report on Technical and Professional Qualifications will also be considered by the committee in future.

Members noted the information provided.

The Chair confirmed that both government departments welcomed the formation of this committee as it added an additional governance control.



The Chief Executive provided some background and context to this item. He advised that the Regulatory Advisory Committee had explored the detail of the report with Dr Wheadon and were content to recommend it to Council for further consideration.

Council discussed the content of the report in detail and sought clarification on a wide range of matters, including :

- Risks
- Fit for purpose qualification
- Confidence in CCEA as a Regulator and Awarding Organisation
- Contextualisation of the report
- Timing of publication

Members were content with the explanations provided and considered the suggestion of a contextualised article approach.

It was agreed that an article be drawn up on the findings of the report taking account of the discussion and points raised by Council including accessibility for a range of audiences. The draft document will be considered by Council once finalised.

The Chief Executive recommended that December 2016 would be a suitable time for publication.

## **9 Revision of Specifications**

### ***Project Update***

**C/121/4**

The Chief Executive introduced this item. He confirmed the project was on time and proceeding as planned.

#### *GCE Specifications*

The Director of Qualifications (DoQ) confirmed that all 22 GCE specifications had been accredited and will be delivered to schools for first teaching in September 2016. A range of support programmes were now being developed for teachers on the new specifications.

She advised that two additional subjects : Life and Health Sciences is awaiting accreditation and will be available for first teaching in September 2016. Professional Business Services is progressing for first teaching in September 2017.

#### *GCSE Specifications*

To date 37 qualifications strategies have been approved. Members noted the timescales for completion detailed at Appendix 2.

Members commended the work completed to date.

Clarification was sought on whether the review had been impacted in light of the TNC issue. The DoQ advised that she continued to work closely with the Education Authority to ensure the correct expertise required to write papers and participate in the examinations processing period is realised. Non-essential meetings are now being conducted electronically and schedules of future meetings will be drafted to ensure teachers can participate.

The Chair confirmed that the main teaching unions had requested a meeting with him and the Chief Executive. He assured members that the issue was being closely monitored and treated as high priority during the summer series.

## **10 Education**

### ***Education Committee Reports : meetings held on 11 May and 7 June 2016***

#### ***11 May 2016***

The Chair of the Committee advised that this was his first meeting together with new co-opted members. He drew attention to the detail of the minutes provided and reported on the following :

#### *Induction*

- 6 new members have been co-opted onto the committee. An induction session was held on 11 May to introduce them to the nature of business debated by the Committee. This was followed by the main meeting.

#### *Main Meeting*

- OfQual Consultation : members received a detailed presentation to support a draft response on Marking Reviews, Appeals, Grade Boundaries and Code of Practice.
- Statistical Report on Enquiry about Results : members received an update in this area.
- OfQual Audit on Understanding Business Enterprise : members noted the condition of the audit still remained despite CCEA Regulation having responsibility for all qualifications.
- Revision of Specifications : Progression from Key Stage 3 : members received a joint presentation from the Qualifications and Curriculum Links group.
- Expert Group : members were advised that the interim report was being considered by the new Minister and once available will be issued to the Council and Committee.

#### ***7 June 2016***

The Chair of the Committee advised this was a special meeting convened to discuss and put forward recommendations to Council on the Revision of Specifications : Tiering of GCSE English and GCE Mathematics : Large Data Sets. He confirmed that both items were discussed and recommended to go forward to Council for consideration at this meeting.

Members noted the information provided.

## ***Tiering of GCSE English***

**C/121/5**

The Chief Executive introduced the item and drew attention to the detail provided in paper **C/121/5**. He confirmed that the options outlined had been discussed in detail by the Education Committee who agreed to recommend **Option 1 : Untiered Specification** to the Council for consideration.

Council were content with the Committee's recommendation and **formally approved Option 1**. This was proposed by Dr Neill Morton and seconded by Mr Robert Thompson for the record.

## ***GCE Mathematics : Large Data Sets***

**C/121/6**

The Chief Executive introduced this item. He advised that to ensure standards and comparability CCEA stayed in line with the English decision to delay the GCE mathematics specification for a further year. In the new CCEA specification the preference is to progress the current decision and provide options on large data sets.

He confirmed that a significant amount of work had been undertaken to provide the Options for consideration by the Education Committee in order to deliver the new specification. The Committee recommended **Option 3 : Use context for large data sets** to Council for consideration.

Council were content with the Committee's recommendation and **formally approved Option 3**. This was proposed by Mrs Rosemary Cowan and seconded by Mr Robert Thompson for the record.

## **11 Finance, Planning and Performance**

### ***Draft Response to Draft Programme for Government (PfG)***

**C/121/7**

The Chief Executive gave a brief presentation which included :

- Executive timeline : deadline for response : 22 July 2016
- Analysis of the Outcomes in the PfG
- Key indicators and measures

Members were asked to consider the draft response and provide comments outside of the meeting to the Manager of the Council Secretariat by 5 July 2016. The Chair confirmed that any amendments would be made and incorporated into the final document for his approval before submission on 22 July.

A Council member suggested a meeting with the Minister to discuss the Programme for Government further. The Chair confirmed he had requested a meeting and he will invite the Minister to meet Council.

He confirmed that Katrina Godfrey had agreed to attend the development day on Wednesday 7 September 2016 to provide an input on the PfG

**6 April 2016**

The Chair (of Council) advised that this was a special meeting of the committee to discuss and recommend the budget proposals 2016/17 to Council. He confirmed that the committee received a presentation and detailed paper for consideration. Members were content to recommend the proposals to Council.

He advised that this was his last meeting as Chair of the Finance Committee.

**22 June 2016**

Mrs Rosemary Cowan, advised that this was her first meeting as Chair of the Finance Committee. Members were assured that the committee had fulfilled its scrutiny and challenge function on all items of the agenda.

As the minutes were not yet finalised a verbal report was provided on the following:

- Draft Year End Position 31 March 2016 : an underspend of £17K (0.1%) reported at year end. This was an excellent performance, well within the 1% DE tolerance limit.
- Finance Report as at 31 May 2016 : members noted an underspend of £116K at this time.
- Corporate Plan : Monitoring Report : members discussed the report and were content with the information provided.

The above items were on the Council agenda for this meeting.

- Procurement and Business Case Update : One live procurement with CPD ongoing at present. With the Education CoPE : One has been completed and one scheduled for completion. 118 business cases approved between February and May 2016.
- 2 Business Cases were reviewed and approved by the Committee.
- HR Report : members received an update on progress with the people strategy and the range of initiatives underway.
- Draft Estates Strategy : was considered and approved to go out for consultation.
- VES Close Out Report : members noted the information provided.
- The Committee approved the 2015/16 PRP Policy and Framework.

Clarification was sought that PRP payments were made in relation to achievement of targets. The Chief Executive confirmed this was the case.

*Closed Session*

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that members received an update on the restructure of the top management team in a closed session at close of normal business.

Council noted the information provided.

***Finance Report : Draft Year-End Budget Position***

***C/121/8***

The Finance Manager (FM) reported an underspend of £17K (0.1%) at year end. He confirmed this was within the DE target of 1% of budget – a significantly improved year end position which reflected the range of contingencies put in place and a substantial amount of work by budget holders and managers to achieve this year-end position.

It was confirmed that the VES funding had been fully utilised.

The Chair, on behalf of Council, commended the amount of work carried out and challenges faced during the year to achieve this result.

Members were content with the information provided.

***Finance Report as at 31 May 2016***

***C/121/9***

The FM drew attention to the information provided in paper **C/121/9** and reported an overspend of £116K. He advised this was an acceptable position at this time and confirmed that an internal monitoring round would be carried out to address and manage the underspends moving forwards.

Members were content with the information provided.

The Chair commended the format and presentation of the reports.

***Statement of Financial Position as at 31 May 2016***

***C/121/10***

Members noted the information provided.

***Draft 2015/16 Annual Report and Accounts***

***C/121/11***

The Chief Executive introduced this item. He confirmed the documents had been reviewed by the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee in detail and recommended to Council for final consideration.

The FM outlined the process to date and advised on minor amendments made in light of the UK decision to leave the EU.

Members were content with the information provided and formally approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2015/16. This was proposed by Mr Martin Donnelly and seconded by Mr Robert Thompson for the record.

The FM advised that final documentation would be signed by the Chair and Chief Executive before submission to DE and laying before the Assembly.

The Chief Executive drew attention to the detail of paper C/121/12 and advised that 100 out of 108 objectives had been achieved or on track for achievement at year end. The Revision of Specifications objective has now been achieved. He provided a brief overview of those targets not achieved (detail provided in Finance Committee minutes of 22 June).

Clarification was sought and received on the sickness absence target and customer satisfaction indicators. The Chief Executive confirmed that this information would be brought forward to the Finance Committee at a future meeting.

Members were content with the information provided.

## **12 Any Other Business**

None identified.

## **13 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of Council was confirmed as Wednesday 28 September 2016 at 10 am.

The Chair reminded members that a Council Development Session was arranged for Wednesday 7 September from approximately 9.30 am to 3pm and asked for suggestions for consideration for the programme to be sent to the Manager of the Council Secretariat outside of the meeting.

He thanked members and officers for their input into the meeting and for their support during the 2015/16 year.