

Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Council

Minutes of the fifty-first meeting of Council, held on Wednesday 3 March 2004 at 1000 hours in Room 111, 1st Floor, CCEA, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present:

Dr A Lennon (Chairman)	Mr B Carlin
Dr A Murray	Mrs P O'Farrell
Mr J Clarke	Mr B Turtle
Ms J Bell	Mrs D Black
Mr D Thompson	Professor P Roebuck
Mrs M Watson	Mrs H McClenaghan
Dr W Mulryne	

Mr D Woods, Assessor, Department of Education
Mrs M Cree, Assessor, Department for Employment and Learning
Mr D McCall, Assessor, ETI

Mr G Boyd, Chief Executive
Dr A Walker, Head of Education Services
Mr D Mulholland, Head of Corporate Services

Ms C Gallagher, Item 5 only

Miss N Kennedy, Manager CE Office

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr J Collins; Mr J Ellison; Mr J Lee; and Mr D McKee.

2 Chairman's business

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and reported that:

- The Chief Executive is conducting a series of dinners for Grammar School Principals to discuss the key stage 3 feedback following consultation. They have also provided the opportunity for discussion of Costello.
- The next Council meeting scheduled for Wednesday 21 April would be an all-day workshop to look at the e-learning and e-services strategies. Details will be sent out in advance.
- Members' have received a copy of the Costello report, and most of the curriculum changes that CCEA have proposed have been referred to in the document.
- There has been no response to date from the Minister on our Key Stages advice. Mr Woods confirmed that the department had been dealing with Costello and Tomlinson and it was hoped that the response would be sent out within the next few weeks.

- Head of Education Services vacancy was advertised recently. Interviews are due to take place on 29 March in the hope that an appointment will be made before the end of March to ensure a substantial handover period before Dr Walker retires at the end of the year.

3 Minutes of previous meetings held on 17 December 2003 and 21 January 2004

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 December 2003 and 21 January 2004 (workshop for 14-19) were approved by Council and copies signed by the Chairman.

Action points

The Chief Executive reported that the majority of action points had been dealt with or are on the agenda for today's meeting. He reported that:

- a meeting with Mr Turtle and Ms Watson to discuss the Chinese visit, will be arranged before the end of March;
- the letter from the Consultation Institute reporting that our consultation on Key Stage 3 was excellent. We have had a number of detailed sessions on how we can improve the process of consultation going forward. The letter and summary report are on the website.

The Chief Executive wished to place on record is thanks to all staff for the enormous effort made to meet the very tight deadline. Dr Anne Murray added her congratulations to the staff involved in the consultation.

4 Committees

Regulation & Qualifications Committee

Professor Roebuck reported that:

- an officer from the Universities Ireland project wishes to consult with CCEA regarding expertise in CASS and harmonisation of qualifications across awarding bodies;
- we will be required to respond to the consultation on the introduction of the Unique Learner Number;
- Progress File has been delayed because of current teacher industrial action; discussions will take place with the department on implications of the delay;
- CATs project – a meeting will take place with the Minister to discuss future developments;
- Key Skills Review – pilot exercise of 10 schools will begin in September 2004;
- Cohort Study 16-19 : recommendation for further element to be developed;

Discussions also took place on 14-19 developments, Tomlinson and the Costello report.

Audit Committee

In the absence of Mr Collins, the Chief Executive reported that:

- Period of notice for business managers has been reviewed and now set at 3 months;
- Programme of internal audit work for next financial year has been confirmed with Deloitte;
- Risk Management Register has been completely reviewed and will be approved by the Business Committee at its next meeting;
- Accounts for 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 have now been signed off by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Accounts for 2003/2004 are on target for sign off in September 2004.

Mr Carlin commended the Risk Management team on an excellent and thorough approach to this difficult subject.

Business Committee

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr Carlin reported that:

- A visit to the William Ritchie building to view the additional accommodation would be arranged for a future meeting;
- A further corporate planning session for business committee would be arranged before 31 March;
- ALTA Heads of Agreement document would be presented to the next meeting for approval;
- Accounts are in good order going forward and a balanced budget would be presented to the next meeting. The Chief Executive has been asked to meet with the Department to ensure that formal funding arrangements are put in place at the earliest possible stage;
- Business Assurance: work on the submission for the UK Quality Award has begun. Deadline April 2005;
- No outstanding tribunal cases to date; and
- We have not yet appointed a Finance Manager.

Curriculum & Assessment Committee

Dr Mulryne informed members that the Curriculum & Assessment Committee met on 18 and 27 February due to a very substantial agenda and issues that needed fully debated. He reported that :

- Primary Modern languages advice would be discussed in full at the next committee meeting in May;
- Key Stage 4 Cohort Study was approved for dissemination. The Draft post-16 report was considered and a proposal for a further overview report on all phases was welcomed.
- Early Years Enriched Curriculum Project : the 3rd report was considered in detail. It was agreed that more hard evidence be brought forward to the meeting in May to enable definite proposals to be presented to Council in June.
- Primary Movement: Proposals for the extension of the project were approved subject to clarification of costs. Members requested Martin McPhillips give a full presentation on his findings at the next meeting of the Committee. It was agreed that the invitation would be extended to Council Members.
- Special Needs guidance will be published alongside the primary curriculum materials in main stream as well as special schools.

Mr Clarke asked if the Inspectorate could take a view of this guidance as part of their normal inspection programme of the enriched curriculum. Dr Mulryne stated that the research on the enriched curriculum was incomplete but confirmed that the Inspectorate would be asked to comment from their normal school inspections.

5 Curriculum and Assessment Review

Update on revision of KS3 proposals in light of consultation

C/51/1

The Chairman reminded members that as a result of feedback from the Consultation it was agreed that more work would be undertaken to improve but not undermine the original proposals.

Ms Gallagher confirmed that focus groups for each of the strands of the curriculum had been set up to discuss the feedback. The majority of the changes were refinements but did not constitute major changes to content with the exception of Science, which would be looked at again in detail and reviewed by the Curriculum and Assessment Committee at its meeting in May. However, Council are required to comment on specific changes regarding the position of Home Economics and Drama.

Home Economics

The Chief Executive explained that the main concern expressed by subject specialists was the positioning of the subject within Learning for Life and Work. The four options considered by the specialists were :

1. Returning Home Economics to Environment and Society as a non-statutory subject;
2. Alignment of Home Economics with PE because of the health message;
3. Home Economics becoming a discrete area (e.g. Maths, PE, Modern Languages); and
4. Remaining within Learning for Life and Work but as a separate 4th strand.

Dr Mulryne confirmed that this was discussed in detail by the Curriculum and Assessment Committee. Members felt that Option 4 should be brought forward to Council for final recommendation.

Mrs Black confirmed that meetings had taken place with the board officers and teachers and they were happy that Home Economics would receive the appropriate recognition if named as a separate strand within the Learning for Life and Work Area.

Drama

Ms Gallagher reported that during discussions with the working groups 50% recommended that Drama remain within the Arts and 50% recommended that it be included within English.

Following detailed discussions, the committee recommended that: Drama be positioned under the Arts rather than the English Learning Area, however, an explanatory statement should be included indicating that schools who do not provide Drama as a discrete subject may deliver Drama as part of their English Programme or within PSHE.

Mr Carlin said it was important to maintain drama facilities within schools and if not there should be an opportunity to develop drama in order to teach it.

Dr Mulryne confirmed that it is intended to encourage drama in schools but also to recognise that schools will have different provision. Ms Watson asked that the paragraph stop at 'methodology'.

Members agreed the recommendations for home economics and drama.

The Chairman informed members that work continues on mathematics and science to ensure progression through to Key Stage 4. He asked for a full programme of work to be presented at a future Council meeting once all of the issues had been worked through.

6 Regulation and Qualifications

Draft Policy Development Project Proposals – Qualifications

C/51/2

The Chairman reminded members that as a result of the council workshop on 21 January, a need was identified for:

- a review of the whole area of 14-19 qualifications; and

- business education links, employment and careers advice.

There is also a need for CCEA to consider the potential impact of issues raised in the Tomlinson report in relation to requirements in Northern Ireland. We have been asked by DfES to comment on Tomlinson as they wish to understand the regional aspect this will be taken forward with Department of Education and Department for Employment and Learning.

This proposal is draft terms of reference and guidelines between Council and on this occasion, the Regulation and Qualifications Committee. The area of 14-19 Qualifications will be looked at in terms of:

- relevance and appropriateness of qualifications for the teaching environment;
- the qualifications that support the new curriculum;
- the quality of qualifications; and
- the appropriate replacements for vocational and academic

The Chief Executive said that this is an attempt to formalise areas of policy development for the Council.

He explained that the Policy Committee has considered the area of business education, employment and careers advice and have suggested setting up an additional sub-committee of Council to drive the links between business education and employment. Council will be provided with an update on developments at its meeting in June.

Members discussed the proposal and asked for the following suggestions to be taken on board:

- benchmarking should be wider and include the Republic of Ireland;
- there should be more connectivity at the top end of Key Stage 3 – therefore 11-19 should be included;
- England and Wales should be replaced by '*elsewhere*';
- Careers advice should be an integral strategy;
- Interfaces within the proposal need to be expanded to include HE Admissions Officers, Further Education and other education partners;
- All qualifications in this cohort progression group and their equivalents across the board need to be fit for purpose and this has to be fully reflected in the proposal;
- Comparability under success criteria should be clearly stated.

Mrs Cree said that the Skills Agenda would come out of the Further Education Review and it was essential that all departments including CCEA worked together going forward.

The Chairman thanked members and assured them that the comments would be taken on board and incorporated into the document.

Tomlinson report and overview presentation

Dr Walker gave a presentation on issues arising out of the Tomlinson report which need to be addressed in the Northern Ireland context, in particular:

- Assessment;

- Different models i.e. overarching certificate or diploma;
- The matriculation debate.

The Chairman thanked Dr Walker for his presentation and the summary on issues which would be considered further by Council.

It was agreed that copies of Dr Walker's presentation would be circulated to members.

Cohort Study : Key Stage 4 final report and post-16 draft report

Dr Walker reported that this had been a worthwhile experience and many lessons have been learned over the last 10 years. The Key Stage 4 document was approved for publication by Curriculum & Assessment Committee, and approved the proposal for an overview of the 3 reports to be carried out. The full 16-19 report is available for members on request.

Professor Roebuck raised the possibility of extending the proposal to 3rd Level. Dr Walker said that no funding was available at present, however a proposal for extending to 3rd level could be presented to Council subject to funding.

The Chairman agreed that funding should be sought for this extension.

7 Finance

Financial position end January 2004

C/51/4

Mr Mulholland reported an underspend of £141K at the end of January 2004, mainly due to the impact of industrial action on pilot projects within the Curriculum Business Unit, however a balanced position was anticipated at year end.

The Department of Education have confirmed approval of budget allocations for 2003/2004 as outlined in paper C/51/4.

Draft Operational Plan and Budget

C/51/5

Mr Mulholland stressed that the budget figures presented were preliminary and have been subsequently revised. An urgent meeting is being sought with the Department to confirm the spending projections for next year. Members were assured that a balanced budget would be presented to Business Committee at its next meeting.

The draft operational plan has been revised to include a number of enhancements including:

- Improved alignment of objectives with associated expenditure;
- Improved clarity around the performance measures associated with all objectives;
- Improved automation of the process to enable actual spending to be directly linked and reported against planned spending going forward;

- Online query and search facilities on the Operational Plan; and
- The creation of a variety of different report formats.

Members congratulated Mr Mulholland on a very thorough and accurate document.

Corporate Planning Process

C/51/6

Mr Mulholland tabled a brief overview of the outputs from Corporate Planning Sessions held with Senior Managers and Business Committee. Members took the view that the Corporate Plan should be reviewed on a quarterly basis and take the form of a 3-year rolling plan to take account of changing conditions on an annual basis.

A number of themes and strategic aims have been identified for further exploration and a final consultation session for Business Committee is currently being organized for 22 March.

A final draft plan will be brought forward to Business Committee at its meeting in April and Council for approval to consult with our stakeholders.

8 TMT Update

The Chief Executive reported on :

Key Stage 3 Dinners : The first of a series of eight dinners for Grammar School Principals throughout the province took place on 16 February in Armagh. He thanked Ms O'Farrell and Mr McCall for attending.

National Assessment Agency (NAA): this is a newly formed agency (subsidiary of QCA) appointed to oversee examinations in England. It will seek to attract examiners and will increase fees of up to 20%. This will have implications for CCEA and we have taken the view that we will have to increase our fees pro rata to protect our own operations. We have raised this with the Department of Education who will have to discuss funding with DfES.

Technology : draft e-Learning and e-Services strategies will be presented to the e-Learning & Services Committee at its meeting on 8 March. Since the last Council meeting we have had several meetings with C2K where we have been addressing issues of concern raised with regard to interfaces, materials and quality control. The NIELP (Northern Ireland E-Learning Partnership) remains a cause for concern. We are seeking to address this with the Department of Education.

Staff Conference : will be held on Friday 5 March. General theme will be to review the performance of the organization against the Corporate Plan and look ahead for the coming year. A series of workshops have been planned and our guest speaker will speak on self-motivation and personal developments. Council members were invited to attend.

9 Any other business

The Chairman informed members that his second term as chairman ends on 31 March 2004. He has re-applied but at present cannot confirm whether he has been successful.

Dr Murray asked for an update on the impact the teachers' industrial action on CCEA's operations. The Chief Executive reported that this has impacted significantly on the key stage assessment in terms of moderation. 300 schools have been invited to take part with only 90 replies as a result of the action. Examinations has not been affected as those teachers who act as examiners are under contract with CCEA.

10 Date of next meeting

The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting will be an all-day workshop type meeting focusing on e-learning. The meeting will take place on Wednesday 21 April 2004 in CCEA.

CHAIRMAN

DATE

