

Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Council

Minutes of the fifth-eighth meeting of Council, held at 10.00 hours on Wednesday 8 June 2005 at 1000 hours in the Radisson Hotel, Cromac Place, Belfast.

Present:

Dr W Mulryne (Chairperson)	Mr J Clarke
Mr D Thompson	Mr D McKee
Ms P O'Farrell	Ms M Watson
Mr J Ellison	Mr J Collins
Professor P Roebuck	Mrs H McClenaghan
Mrs D Black	

Mr D Woods, (DE Assessor)
Mr D McCall (ETI Assessor)

Mrs B O'Hare (DEL 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) for Item 8 only
Ms C Gallagher (Curriculum & Assessment Manager)
Mr M Montgomery (Assessment Manager) for Item 5 only
Mr R McCune (Accreditation Manager)
Mrs J Scharf (Principal Officer)
Dr C Egerton (Principal Officer) for Item 6 only

Miss N Kennedy, Support Manager to Council

Introduction

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

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr A Lennon; Dr A Murray; Mr B Carlin; Mr J Collins; Mr B Turtle; Mr J Lee.

2 Chairman's business

The Acting Chairman reported that the following officers would join the meeting :

- Ms Gallagher and Mr Montgomery - Curriculum & Assessment items;
- Mr McCune; Mrs Scharf and Dr Egerton - Regulation & Qualifications items; and
- Mr Hanna for the item on RPA.

The following papers were tabled :

- JCQ Access Arrangements and Special Consideration ; requested at the last meeting;
- Appendix 3 – statistical analysis on the Pupil Profile (for paper C/38/1); and
- Minutes of the Curriculum & Assessment Committee (27 April) and Audit Committee (18 May).

Members were advised that due to the substantial items on the agenda the meeting would continue into the afternoon.

3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 14 April 2005

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 14 April 2005 were approved by Council and a copy signed by the acting Chairman.

Action points

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

The Chief Executive reported that:

- He had discussed the letter from the Minister regarding the strategic working group with the Chairman.
- Discussions continue with DE concerning ICT support around the pupil profile; and
- Benchmarking with Finland remains on the agenda.

It was agreed that the letter on 'definition of courses' which has been sent to the Minister be circulated to Council.

Mr Woods confirmed that the advice received from CCEA will be incorporated into the guidance, however, this will be explained in a helpful way to ensure schools understand what is meant by courses and applied courses.

Dr Mulryne was content that the comments made by the Regulation & Qualifications committee members had been incorporated into the letter sent to the Minister.

4 Committees

(a) Business Committee : 23 March and 18 May 2005

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

- Significant discussions have taken place on the RPA, all of which will be reflected in the update and presentation at today's meeting.
- Finances and year-end accounts were discussed in detail. Small surplus remained at year end largely because of the teacher industrial action and subsequent lower substitute cover costs. Income was higher than anticipated as a result of increased market share.
- Draft budgets were discussed and approved by Council at its last meeting.

- Statement of Internal Control – also discussed by the Audit Committee. Document sets out the controls put in place throughout the organisation and those which have been tightened up as a result of recommendations by the Internal Auditors. The level of assurance was reported as higher than the previous year.
- Operational Plan – end of year review: the committee continues to monitor progress and make recommendations as appropriate.
- Corporate Plan – has been updated to meet the Department's request of relating to their 3 year sectoral plan and is rolled out to 2008. The committee requested some changes which have been taken on board.
- Update on preparations for 2005 summer examinations – the major recruitment programme for examiners and markers has proved successful with a full complement of markers in place for this year's process.

(b) Regulation & Qualifications Committee : 20 April 2005

Professor Roebuck, Chairman of the Committee, reported discussions had taken place on:

- *PQA (Post Qualifications Admissions)*. CCEA would engage in the debate through Mrs Scharf who had been elected as CCEA's representative on to the Northern Ireland Standing Group of UCAS.

CCEA have taken part in the consultation and proposals were discussed at the meeting. These will be further developed and brought back to the committee for approval.

Mr Woods said that as a result of work done nationally on PQA further consultation may be necessary.

- *Scrutiny reports for GCE Biology; GCSE Business Studies; and GCSE Applied ICT (Double Award)*. These reports were more critical and detailed than previous. Recommendations and action plans have been drawn up and a progress report will be given at the next meeting.
- *Review of GCSE/GCE coursework arrangements*. Main issues and actions outlined in the paper were discussed and endorsed by the committee. A further update would be given at the next meeting.
- *14-19 curriculum/qualifications development*. Implications for Northern Ireland arising out of the White paper were outlined for the committee. This is work in progress and a further update would be given at the next meeting.
- *Credit Framework developments*. Interim report was provided to the committee.

Ms Watson raised the issue of attendance at agreement trials and suggested that 'mandatory' may not be the appropriate approach. She asked for further consideration to be given to better arrangements to ensure information is distributed to centres.

Professor Roebuck reported that issues regarding malpractice and plagiarism would be taken forward and progress reported at the next meeting.

(c) Curriculum & Assessment Committee : 27 April 2005

Dr Mulryne, Chairman of the Committee, reported that a large part of the issues discussed by the committee were on the agenda for the Council meeting. He reported that:

- Progress continues on primary modern languages; the enriched curriculum and issues surrounding C2K software.
- Members received a detailed presentation on the differences between the progress file and the pupil profile. Members were encouraged with the work done to date.
- Pupil Profile at Key Stage 3 – proposals were presented to the committee and comments made. An update on the trials and further discussion around pupil profile were on the agenda for the Council meeting.
- Work continues with PMB (Programme Management Board) on the implementation of the new curriculum. Various issues were raised concerning information for schools. These were taken on board. A final version of the PMB strategy will be made available to the committee at its meeting in October.
- Members had received an encouraging report from spelling research and had agreed publication of same.
- Members endorsed the publication of the Primary Movement research report.

Mr Clarke drew attention to the Progress File and asked that at some point in the future a report back on

- The views of schools on how they are managing the progress file and pupil profile;
- Identify priority and blend as many things together as possible.

The Chief Executive confirmed that there would be a certain amount of merging whilst recognizing that they would be slightly different.

He reported that at a recent Accountability Review meeting with the Permanent Secretary, concerns were expressed about the management of the curriculum implementation project. The view was put forward that a dedicated project manager supported by a clearly defined team with a project plan and sufficient funding may help ensure implementation is on target and within budget. Mr Woods confirmed that this was being pursued and it was intended to bring together a coherent and well managed programme.

Ms O'Farrell asked for a copy of the 'Understanding Pupil Profile – A Guide for Parents' leaflet.

(d) Audit Committee : 18 May 2005

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr Collins, the Chief Executive reported on the following :

- Internal audit have identified some concerns where normal procedures have not been followed. To address this we are buying into government sponsored contracts and which include credit card procedures and processes.
- 6 non-compliant purchases above the £1000 limit have been identified. The £1000 threshold has been retained, but measures will be put in place to ensure staff comply with the procedures.
- Statement of internal control and assurance framework was discussed. A more detailed risk response plan is being developed.
- New financial and reporting system has been implemented. HR system is underway.
- 2 reaccreditations to ISO 9001 with no non-compliances have been given. BS7799 and Tick It have been awarded to the IS department.
- Charter Mark has been achieved and the EFQM score has been improved from 519 to 573.
- Deloitte are coming to the end of their Internal Audit contract – normal tendering processes are underway.

Audit office have expressed satisfaction about the processes and procedures in these areas within the organization.

Publication of results in Northern Ireland vs performance and non-publication

Mr McCall made reference to the report and the rising percentage of children leaving school without qualifications and very little basic skills. The Chief Executive said there were real issues around this and the quality and relevance of qualifications to maintain interest.

Dr Mulryne agreed that this was a very important, interesting and valuable topic, which should be discussed at a later date. He asked that this be deferred to a future meeting of the Council, but that it should go through the relevant sub-committee for initial discussion in the first instance. He asked the Chief Executive to raise this with the relevant sub-committee and bring forward to Council as appropriate.

5 Curriculum and Assessment

The Chairman welcomed Ms Gallagher and Mr Montgomery to the meeting.

- ***Pupil Profile : report on trials at key stages 1 & 2***

C/58/1

Mr Montgomery gave a detailed presentation on the Annual Pupil Profile 2005-05 trial. Members were provided with a copy of the presentation.

Dr Mulryne and Mr Ellison confirmed that the presentation of the CARN software given to the Curriculum & Assessment and E-Learning & Services committees had been well received and members were impressed by what they saw.

The Chief Executive confirmed that 2 sets of software have been trialed. He wished to place on record that C2K are doing everything they can to produce a satisfactory solution and we are waiting for them to come back to us. He stressed that CCEA will be clear in its advice as to what the package needs to be and it will be C2K's responsibility to deliver this.

The following points were raised :

- Accessibility and adaptability of profile information for different audiences through different ways in place of producing different versions;
- Irish medium : big issue due to production of the materials in Irish. This needs to be flagged with the Department as early as possible;
- Bank of Irish-medium assessment materials needs to be built up as a priority.

Mr Montgomery agreed that the points would be taken on board.

The Chairman said that the development work scheduled for 2005/2006 (as per presentation) was work in progress and asked Mr Montgomery to report back to Council through the Curriculum & Assessment later in the year.

- **Assessment arrangements at Key Stage 3**

C/58/2

Mr Montgomery gave a short presentation on the main issues on assessment at Key Stage 3. Members were provided with a copy of the presentation.

Professor Roebuck sought clarification as to why the Northern Ireland average would be provided. Mr Montgomery confirmed that this was a request from parents to enable them to know what the benchmark is.

Mr Clarke congratulated officers on the work done to date on pupil profile. He reported that the issues had been debated by the Curriculum & Assessment committee, who were aware that parents do demand knowledge of their child's performance. Consideration will be given to how the information is managed and presented.

The Chairman drew members' attention to the recommendations outlined in paper **C/58/2**, and asked members to discuss and approve as appropriate.

Reporting on the levels of attainment in ICT (page 4)

The Chairman expressed reservations about the proposed changes because of the way in which communication and ICT are viewed by teachers. This is a major change and needs to be thought through and implemented carefully.

Members felt it was too early for ICT to be integrated in the way proposed and suggested that this should be developed further and the advice amended accordingly.

Mr Woods raised the issue of legislation which will say 3 cross curricular skills need to be assessed and levels assigned. In terms of how these are assessed this will be subject to CCEA documentation which should be modified year on year.

The Chief Executive agreed that further developments were necessary. This would be brought back to the curriculum and assessment committee later in the year.

Flexibility and reporting : learning for life and work and general learning areas

Members accepted and agreed the recommendations on page 6 of the paper.

Baseline for progress and achievement at Key Stage 3

Members accepted and agreed the recommendations on page 8 of the paper.

The progress file

Members accepted and approved the recommendations on page 9 of the paper.

Format of the annual pupil profile for Key Stage 3

Members accepted and approved the recommendations on pages 10/11 of the paper.

• **Curriculum Implementation Update** **C/58/3**

Ms Gallagher spoke to the detail of the paper. She drew members attention to :

- Managing the change – research has been done and is both business and education based;
- The number of initiatives schools are dealing with, in particular outside support, and the need for training to be conducted prior to the implementation phase;
- The substantive risks and mitigation measures outlined in the paper and Appendix 1.

The Chairman sought views on the following recommendations

- The appointment of a regional co-ordinator;
- The establishment of a regional training team;
- Provision for appropriate training of trainers to be carried out by suitably skilled professionals;
- The ring-fencing of resources to support and sustain the team throughout the implementation strategy, suitably protected from the developments around RPA; and
- The ring-fencing of appropriate resources to support and sustain the strategy itself.

Mr Woods said there was already recognition that provision on a regional basis was a sensible way to move forward. Mrs McClenaghan supported the regional approach, but expressed serious concern regarding the decision to cut the CASS service and funding in the medium term.

The Chief Executive stated that whilst CCEA recognises the pressures the Boards are under, this is a proposed best way forward taking all of the concerns and pressures into consideration. He sought Council's support on this way forward.

Mr Clarke said it was important to recognize that the PMB strategy needs to merge with a range of other strategies across funding and resources for schools.

The Council endorsed the recommendations, subject to the concerns raised.

6 Regulation & Qualifications

The Chairman welcomed Mr McCune, Mrs Scharf and Dr Egerton to the meeting.

- ***Report on the consultation : Framework for Achievement*** **C/58/4**

Mr McCune spoke to the detail of the paper and drew members' attention to the summary of consultation outcomes and the recommendations. The recommendations have been drawn up in consultation with QCA, NQA and ACCAC. These will be the basis of developing a 2 year work programme to begin to implement the framework with QCA, consistent with the remit we already have.

Members asked that the following points be considered:

- further communication and marketing required to promote this;
- messages need to be clear and consistent;
- setting up of stakeholders group is essential to continue discussions and raising awareness;
- once introduced there will be a need for phased implementation, good communication and marketing to ensure buy in and success.

The Chairman asked that the issues raised be explored with a further update provided at Council later in the year.

Members were happy with this approach.

- ***Update on 14-19 Qualifications development*** **C/58/5**

Mrs Scharf spoke to the detail of the paper which outlined the framework of ongoing collaboration with QCA and ACCAC on the following :

- Re-accreditation of GCE and GCSE qualifications and the timetable for re-accreditation of the specifications;
- The scale of change to subject criteria;
- The extended project; and
- The new diplomas.

The project plan recommends consultation currently with pupils in years 9 and 10 be spread wider on-line.

The Chairman asked DE and DEL to consider and comment on the draft project plan before Council can move forward.

Mr Woods asked Mrs Scharf and other officers to meet with the Departments to discuss the proposals for the next phase and next steps. He agreed that the Departments would send out a commissioning letter to CCEA in light of the 14-19 White Paper.

The Chairman recommended that DE and DEL should agree the next phase of work with CCEA officers and report back to Council later in the year.

8 Review of Public Administration

The Chairman welcomed Mr Hanna to the meeting.

Mr Hanna stressed that this was work in progress. He gave a presentation on discussions to date in relation to :

- Education service overview
- Functional responsibilities of the bodies
- Organisational structures
- Management of change and timescales
- Risks

Members raised the following issues:

- Quality assurance is important to the overall provision of the service;
- Links between schools and colleges to reflect close collaboration;
- Link into colleges in terms of delivery of examinations and the workplace;
- Position of GTC; NICIE; Voluntary Grammar Schools;
- Multiple employing authorities;
- Devolving decision making to schools;
- One Model /two model approach;
- The importance of monitoring standards, regulation and accreditation functions;
- Reference to CCEA's regulatory function to be made;
- Assessment operations and curriculum implementation to be closely linked;
- The inclusion of public examinations in assessment operations, keeping together, curriculum, examinations and assessment, to be made explicit in narrative.

The Chief Executive stressed that we will continue to discuss the areas and issues raised through the meetings of the Council Steering Group and the Senior Management Board.

The final submission would be agreed by Council at its meeting on 8 September. Members will be issued with a draft submission in August and will be given the opportunity to make comments which will inform the final submission.

7 Finance

- ***Finance report as at 30 April 2005***

C/58/6

Mr Mulholland reported baseline expenditure is on target. Projects are underspent by £63K mainly in the area of curriculum development because of a difference between the budgeted and actual timing of the projects. Overall income is on target with no significant concerns. Monthly income profiling will be introduced to assist with forecasting.

- ***Operational Plan – end of year review***

C/58/7

Mr Mulholland reported that the monitoring report shows that 90% of performance measures have been fully actioned or exceeded. This was discussed fully by Business Committee on 18 May and is attached for members' information.

- ***Corporate Plan – rolling forward the 3 year plan***

C/58/8

Mr Mulholland reported that the Corporate Plan has been rolled forward by a further year (2005-2008). This has taken account of the Department's request of clearly relating to their 3 year sectoral plan.

Strategic themes remain unchanged and were endorsed by Business Committee at its meeting on 18 May.

Further corporate planning sessions will be conducted with Senior Managers to ensure the plan contains accurate information.

Members were happy with the information provided.

8 Any other business

None identified.

9 Schedule of meetings 2005/2006

The Chairman drew members' attention to the amended schedule of Council and Committee meetings for 2005/2006 and asked them to note the appropriate dates.

The next meeting of Council was the special meeting to agree the RPA Submission on **Thursday 8 September 2005**. Further details would be issued in advance.