

CCEA

COUNCIL

Minutes of the ninety-third meeting of Council held on Thursday 24 February 2011 at 13.30 hours in Room 115, CCEA, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

Present : Mr J Collins (Acting Chair) Mrs D Black
 Mr J Clarke Ms P O'Farrell
 Mr D Thompson Mr J Wilkinson
 Ms M Crilly

Mrs K Godfrey (DE Observer)

Mr G Boyd (Interim Chief Executive)
Mr R Hanna (Director, Education Strategy)
Ms AM Duffy (Director, Qualifications)
Mr M Quinn (Director, Corporate Services)
Mr J Daly (Financial Controller) Items 1-6 only
Ms R Kennedy (Business Manager, CAR) Item 7 only

Miss N Kennedy (Manager, Council Secretariat)

Election of Chairperson

In the absence of a Chair and Vice-Chair of Council, the Interim Chief Executive advised that under the Standing Orders it was necessary for members to elect a Chair for this meeting. A nomination was sought.

Mr Jim Collins was proposed by Mr John Wilkinson and seconded by Mr David Thompson.

The Interim Chief Executive left the meeting at this point.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Helen McClenaghan.

2 Chair's Business

- Mr J Daly would be present until Item 6 and Ms R Kennedy would be in attendance for Item 7.
- OfQual has issued a press release regarding the inquiry into AQA's examination error. Copies of the full report are available on request.

DE Draft Budget 2011/12 : Consultation

Members noted the information provided.

Voluntary Severance

The DoCS reported that CCEA submitted the business case for 16 members of staff to ESAIT/DE by 31 January 2011 deadline and all queries have been dealt with.

Following notification of approval of the business case, managers will inform relevant staff of their leaving dates. The majority of staff will leave the organisation on 31 March 2011 or by mutual agreement with their line managers. However, some senior members of staff are required to remain until after the Summer Examinations series.

Members noted the final exit date was 30 September 2011.

January 2011 Examination Series

The Director of Qualifications (DoQ) reported that all GCSE and GCE's had been delivered on time and no holding media lines were required.

Members were informed of a potential case of malpractice. Updates would be provided as appropriate.

Following detailed discussions on a range of related issues an assurance was sought that these were being dealt with robustly and in line with relevant procedures. This was confirmed.

3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 16 December 2010

With the inclusion of Mrs K Godfrey to the list of attendees, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 December 2010 were proposed by Mr J Wilkinson and seconded by Mrs D Black as a true and accurate record.

A copy was signed by the Acting Chair.

Action Points

English Examination Issue

Information has been redacted under s. 40 (Personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as disclosure would breach the right of individual(s) under Principle 1 (Fair processing) of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Information has been redacted under s. 43 (2) (Commercial interests) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

4 Correspondence

The Acting Chair asked members to note the correspondence received from the Permanent Secretary (DE) and relevant responses from the Interim Chief Executive.

5 Governance and Accountability

Terms of Reference for CCEA Committees (Finance, Audit & Risk, Education) (C/93/1,2,3)

The Acting Chair advised that there would be an opportunity to discuss these ToR at the next Council meeting. Members were asked to contact the Manager of the Council Secretariat with any comments they wished to make on the drafts provided.

Mr Jim Clarke joined the meeting at this point

6 Finance and Planning

Finance Committee Report : 8 February 2011

The Chairman of the Committee reported that members had applied their scrutiny function to all finances. They noted the reasons for a potential project underspend and that a further £300K may be returned to DE at year end.

Members expressed concern that the budget for 2011/12 had not yet been confirmed. The Interim Chief Executive continued to make representations to DE on this issue.

Procurement

The committee expressed concern regarding the difficulties in securing CoPE service to assist with CCEA's contracts.

The DE representative said that procurement lay within the responsibility of each organisation. DE could provide assistance in signposting CoPEs. They do not have to be within the ELBs.

The Chairman confirmed that every effort had been made to secure services outside of the ELB CoPE. He assured DE that CCEA would endeavour to keep within Audit requirements. He advised that a clear audit trail had been kept and all issues had been raised with DE to date.

Management Statement

The Committee noted that the limit of £30K had not been adhered to. This has now been rectified.

Council Members noted the information provided.

Finance Report as at 31 January 2011

C/93/4

The Financial Controller (FC) drew members' attention to the detail of paper **C/93/4**. In summary CCEA is £724K underspent at this time.

The changes for the February 2011 monitoring round were :

- £300K release of baseline funding
- £372K release of project funding
- £32K increase in non-cash budget (depreciation)

The main underspends to date relate to teacher fees; teacher release; printing costs; professional fees and salaries. These were being closely monitored by relevant managers and TMT.

It was confirmed that there would be no overspends.

The Chairman asked that every effort be made to ensure there would be no further underspends identified before year end.

A Council member sought clarification as to whether or not the claiming of teacher release was within CCEA's control. The Director of Education Strategy (DoES) said this was not. He explained how the call off by schools on teacher release funding was outside CCEA's control.

The cost of printing has reduced considerably in comparison with previous years. With budgets based on previous experience of printing costs this has resulted in surplus.

The FC advised that he was drafting a letter to DE on the issues around teacher release including the findings from the internal audit report. Members asked that this be pursued and reported back at the next meeting.

The FC confirmed that significant easements throughout the year had been declared to DE and that a proportion of this was efficiency savings.

Members were content with the scrutiny applied to these issues.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 January 2011

C/93/5

Members noted the information provided.

7 Audit

Audit and Risk Committee Report : 13 January 2011

The Chairperson of the committee drew members' attention to the detail of the minutes.

She confirmed that the committee had been informed of a range of audit activities under way for CCEA and DE, as well as a substantial number of internal audits.

She welcomed the fact that the draft ToR for Audit & Risk would be discussed at the next Council meeting (as this was an area of concern for members).

Members noted the information provided.

8 Education

The Acting Chair welcomed Ms Ruth Kennedy to the meeting. He advised that adequate time had been allocated for full discussion of the recommendations.

Draft Advice: *Information has been redacted under s. 36 (2) (b) (ii) (Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs) where, in the reasonable opinion of the qualified person, disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice –*

The free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation.

The Acting Chair sought agreement that members were content, subject to the amendments suggested, that the advice be prepared and forwarded to DE as soon as possible. Members agreed.

He thanked officers for the significant amount of work on the preparation of the draft advice and members for the scrutiny applied to each recommendation.

The DoES wished to place on record his thanks to his colleagues for the amount of work put into the preparation of the paper and for the valuable inputs from teachers, principals, the NITC and GTCNI.

GCSE Science Specification Revision

C/93/7

The Director of Qualifications (DoQ) confirmed that there had been no accreditation from OfQual on any of CCEA's Science specifications. TMT have expressed concern regarding progress on this issue and have asked for it to be investigated further, in particular Biology.

All centres taking CCEA science qualifications have been kept informed of developments. A Council member stated that it was important for CCEA to continue this communication and hoped that the situation would soon be resolved.

An update would be provided at the next meeting.

CCEA Monitoring of OfQual Recommendations

C/93/8

The DoQ advised that Stage 1 was virtually completed. Stage 2 would be progressed over a longer period of time as the processes and procedures will be monitored and revised to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Monitoring Grid

The Monitoring Grids were provided to members to assure them that each recommendation have specific actions and timescales attached.

The Chairman sought confirmation from the DE representative if she was content with the level of detail provided. This was confirmed.

Members were content with the information provided.

Entitlement Framework – Development of Qualifications

The DoQ gave a brief presentation on the development work on the Entitlement Framework (a copy was circulated to members for information). The main issues arising were :

- Gaps had been identified through engagement with Invest NI and the Sector Skills Councils.
- There was a need to maintain links with Invest NI and have a shared platform with businesses across the province.
- Within CCEA, the Qualifications Business Units would amalgamate to allow for consistency of provision in this area and enable a shared portfolio for schools to be developed.

Members welcomed these developments.

9 Any Other Business

None identified.

10 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 20 April 2011.

The Acting Chair sought agreement for all Council and Committee meetings to revert back to the 10.30 am start. This was agreed.

He asked that any external members and all Council members be notified of this change and a revised Schedule of Meetings circulated.