

**MINUTES OF THE THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE  
GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND  
HELD ON MONDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2005,  
AT THE SEAGOE HOTEL, PORTADOWN**

**Present:**

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Mr Ivan Arbuthnot     | Mrs Sally McKee         |
| Mrs Jeannette Chapman | Mrs La'Verne Montgomery |
| Mr John Colgan        | Dr Wilfred Mulryne      |
| Ms Monica Cummings    | Ms Aedín ní Ghadhra     |
| Mr Eddie Ferguson     | Mr David Oldfield       |
| Ms Maria Graham       | Mr Alistair Orr         |
| Mrs Teresa Graham     | Mrs Thea Patton         |
| Ms Miriam Karp        | Mr Philip Sheerin       |
| Mr Tony Lappin        | Mr Peter Scott          |
| Mr Paddy McAllister   | Mr Gordon Topping       |
| Mr Ray McGuigan       | Mrs Grace Trimble       |

**In Attendance:**

- Mr Eddie McArdle (Registrar)
- Mr Barney Ball (Policy & Registration Manager)
- Mr Gerard Devlin (Senior Education Officer)
- Mrs Yvonne McCool (Corporate Services Manager)
- Mr Gary Brace (Chief Executive, GTC Wales)
- Mr Gavin Scott (Director of Finance, GTC Scotland)
- Ms Geraldine Garnett-Frizelle (Minute Secretary)

**Apologies:**

|                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Dr Leslie Caul            | Mr Patrick Kinney   |
| Mrs Mary Elizabeth Devine | Mr Dominic McElholm |
| Mr Malachy Doherty        | Dr Marie Murphy     |
| Mrs Frances Donnelly      | Dr Derek Poots      |
| Mr Richard Egan           | Father John Walsh   |

The Chair welcomed two new members of Council to their first meeting; Ms Miriam Karp, who is a DENI nominated representative replacing Mr Ian McInnes, and Dr Wilfred Mulryne, who has replaced Dr Robert Rodgers as the GBA representative. He also welcomed back Mrs La'Verne Montgomery, who has recently returned from maternity leave and offered Council's congratulations to her on the birth of her second son.

The Chair then went on to welcome and introduce two guests to the meeting: Mr Gary Brace, Chief Executive of GTC Wales and Mr Gavin Scott, Director of Finance from GTC Scotland.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were noted.

2. **Council Minutes (GTC/05/Min12)**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the last meeting, (proposed by Mrs Teresa Graham and seconded by Mr John Colgan).

3. **Matters Arising**

The Registrar informed members that, following the last meeting of Council, the Audit Committee had held an election and the Chair and Vice-Chair had both been re-elected to their respective positions.

4. **Chair's Business**

The Chair informed members that he and the Registrar had recently attended an Awards dinner held at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham (ROI) at which Dr Mulryne had been given an award for Services to Education in Ireland. Members expressed their congratulations to Dr Mulryne.

5. **Officers' Business**

The Registrar informed members that the Education and Training Inspectorate was launching its new document, "The Reflective Teacher", at events in each of the five Education and Library Board Areas between 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> June and that GTCNI had been invited to participate in this launch. Either the Registrar or the Policy and Registration Manager planned to speak at the meetings.

The Registrar also informed members that officers had given a presentation on the Review of Teacher Competences at the recent Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South which was held in Dublin and that it had been very well-received by delegates.

6. **CONSULTATION ON NEW ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS (GTC13/05/P1)**

The Senior Education Officer presented this paper to members. He reminded members that they had given some preliminary consideration to an earlier draft on 10<sup>th</sup> March and that the Policy Committee had also considered some of the issues at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February and again on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2005. This latter meeting had concentrated on the issue of pupil profiling.

The Senior Education Officer informed Council that the paper had undergone a number of revisions and that after the Policy meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> May, significant changes were made to the response regarding pupil profiles. It was noted that CCEA is involved in ongoing pilot work on profiles and that Council should, at this stage, restrict itself to general comments on

profiling, with the understanding that further consultations from CCEA would afford Council the opportunity to make more specific remarks.

Members asked that a number of additional comments be added at this stage, including the requirement that the integrity of the profiles needs to protect the curriculum experiences of children in the primary sector and that, although still at an embryonic stage of development, profiles have the potential to increase choice for parents regarding post-primary options.

Further discussion took place about how the profiles should be used to facilitate the new transfer arrangements and in particular what access to the profiles post-primary schools should have during the transfer process itself. Council took the view that the profiles should not be made available to post-primary schools prior to admissions..

Council went on to consider a range of other issues in the draft consultation response. It was noted that reference should be made to the importance of school partnerships rather than inter-school competition, especially in the light of the demographic downturn. The Council considered in detail each of the menu formats being suggested in the consultation for the admissions criteria – open menu, compulsory categories, optional categories and compulsory order, and compulsory categories and compulsory order. The Senior Education Officer illustrated each option and modelled each one against specific criteria described in the consultation; school flexibility/responsiveness to the local community and school consistency/standardisation. Members debated each menu option but concluded that the consultation document, as it stands, does not provide enough details about the potential implications of each option. The Registrar undertook to reflect this view in the Council's final submission to DE.

7. **DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT THE IMPACT OF SENDO ON THE CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (GTC13/05/P2A)**

**CONSULTATION ON THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (NI) ORDER 2005 – DRAFT CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SCHOOLS (GTC13/05/P2B)**

**THE SUPPORT AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS ARISING OUT OF THE SENDO LEGISLATION – SEPT 2005 (GTC13/05/P2C)**

The Senior Education Officer presented these papers to members. It was decided to take the three items together as they were all related. He explained to members that the first of these Consultation documents, Draft Supplementary Guidance to Support the Impact of SENDO on the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, had already been submitted to the Department of Education with the status of an Officers' Response, as the deadline for response had been 17<sup>th</sup> May 2005. However, the paper had been taken to the last meeting of the Policy Committee for discussion and members of Policy had suggested a number of changes. The Chair of the Policy Committee said that, although she felt the revised document reflected the discussions which the Policy Committee had had about this paper, she would like a stronger statement in support of the good work undertaken by Special Schools in Northern Ireland. The Senior Education Officer agreed to make this special reference in paper GTC13/05/P2C "The Support and Resource Implications for Teachers and Schools arising out of the SENDO Legislation – Sept 2005"

Members then went on to discuss the second Consultation document, Consultation on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 – Draft Code of Practice for Schools. They felt that although, overall, they were happy with the response, they would like more emphasis to be given to the need for the provision of adequate and appropriate resources to enable schools to implement the Code of Practice. Officers agreed to strengthen this aspect of the report.

The Senior Education Officer informed members that the third paper, the Support and Resource Implications for Teachers and Schools arising out of the SENDO Legislation – Sept 2005, had been drafted in response to issues raised by the Policy Committee regarding the provision of adequate resources to enable schools to meet their statutory obligations arising from the new SENDO Order due to take effect from September 2005. In it, Officers have drawn attention to the Council’s call for a Charter document which asked for a policy of “costed” programmes predicated upon:

- a detailed costing of initiatives at a regional and school level;
- a commitment to afford schools an extended financial planning window of at least three years; and
- a limitation on the use of ring-fenced initiative funding at board level.

This paper calls for reassurance from the Department to the profession that all is being done to support teachers and schools in carrying out any additional duties which will arise out of SENDO from September 2005 and to produce a costed implementation plan.

The Senior Education Officer informed members that this document would be submitted to DE with Council’s approval. Members agreed. Members thanked Officers for their work on these three papers.

## **8. 2005/06 REGISTRATION FEE COLLECTION – UPDATE (GTC13/05/P3)**

The Registration Manager presented this paper to members. He informed members that the first fee had been collected from teachers by the Department of Education and that, in addition, the Bursars of Voluntary Grammar Schools, were remitting their payments on behalf of their teachers to GTCNI, with five so far submitted. Members asked for clarification with regard to the situation relating to substitute/supply teachers. The Registration Manager explained that, initially discussion had taken place regarding the possibility of having an ongoing deduction from salary throughout the year for supply teachers. However, this had proved to be administratively undeliverable and invoices will now issue to all remaining teachers on the Register, who had not been part of the deduction from salary process undertaken by DE and the VGS sector.

Members also asked about the situation with regard to those teachers working in the FE sector. The Chair informed members that discussions had been initiated with representatives of the Further Education teachers and that Officers would report back to Council on progress in this regard.

Members thanked the Registration Manager for his update.

**9. CHIEF INSPECTORS REPORT – PRESENTATION BY THE REGISTRAR**

The Registrar informed members that he had recently attended the launch of this document by the Inspectorate. He gave a short Powerpoint presentation which highlighted some of the main issues addressed. Members thanked the Registrar for his presentation.

**10. ANNUAL REPORT (GTC12/05/P4)**

The Registrar presented this paper, which had previously been circulated, without the introductory section, to all Committees for information and discussion. He explained to Council members that it was felt the Annual Report served a dual function – firstly, it had a PR and outreach function, to inform the wider education community about the work of the Council. Secondly it provided a report to Council on the work undertaken by Officers on their behalf during the preceding year, progress in ongoing issues and plans for future developments. The Registrar then focused on some of the issues outlined in the report. He reminded members that, because of funding uncertainties at the beginning of this year, some activities planned by the Council had had to be delayed or curtailed, but that, with the resolution of these difficulties, much of the planned work could now be taken forward.

The Registrar informed members that, following the Call for a Charter, at their meeting in October 2004, he and the Chair had had meetings with the Education and Library Boards, the education spokespersons of the main political parties and the unions and all had expressed their broad agreement with and support for the proposal. It was now hoped that a draft Charter would be drawn up and brought to the next Council meeting in early October.

**11. REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (GTC13/05/P5) & PRESENTATION BY MR EDDIE ROONEY**

The Chair welcomed Mr Rooney to the meeting on behalf of Council and thanked him for attending at short notice. Mr Rooney thanked the Council for inviting him to talk to them about this important review and explained that he proposed to give a short powerpoint presentation outlining the main issues raised in the Education section of the Review.

Members asked Mr Rooney if there was currently a timescale in place for the envisaged changes. He responded that no firm decisions had yet been made, but it was hoped that a timescale would be in place by Christmas 2005. He went on to suggest that it was likely that implementation of the changes would probably take somewhere in the region of two years, although this would depend on how long it would take to get the appropriate pieces of legislation in place.

Mr Rooney was also asked if any decision had been made regarding the governance of the Curriculum Support Body. He responded by stating that that no firm decision had yet been made, although early thinking on the matter indicated that it would depend on the composition of the body but that, fundamentally, it would need to be broad-based to reflect the various elements involved.

Members further discussed the underpinning philosophy of education and how the review might have major implications for this, as well as the demographic downturn and its implications for the local agenda. Mr Rooney responded that first and foremost the Review deals with administrative structures, whose function was to serve and support the education

community in Northern Ireland. The Department was working to provide coherence in the provision of service and working towards a long-term vision for education.

The Chair thanked Mr Rooney for his informative presentation.

**12. Committee Minutes**

Audit Committee (AC/05/Min6)

The Chair explained that, as the date of the meeting had been changed to 1<sup>st</sup> June, it had not been possible to circulate members with the minutes before Council. The Chair of Audit gave members a brief summary of the issues discussed and agreed that the minutes would be brought to the next meeting of Council in the autumn for presentation.

General Purposes and Finance Committee (GP&F/05/Min12)

The minutes were presented to Council as a record of the General Purpose and Finance Committee meeting by the Committee Chair.

Policy Committee (PC/05/Min13)

The minutes were presented to Council as a record of the Policy Committee meeting by the Committee Chair.

Registration Committee (RC/05/Min8)

The Chair of the Registration Committee presented the minutes to Council, and indicated that issues relating to the collection of the registration fee had been covered by paper GTC12/05/P3. He went on to inform members that a small working group, to take forward work on the Council's regulatory functions, had been established, and would meet on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2005.

**13. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**14. Venue, Date and Time for Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2005. The venue has not yet been arranged.

Signature.....

Date.....