

**MINUTES OF THE 20TH MEETING OF THE GENERAL TEACHING
COUNCIL FOR N.I., HELD ON THURSDAY 19 APRIL 2007,
AT RADISSON ROE HOTEL, LIMA VADY**

Present:

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| Mrs Sally McKee (Chair) | Mr John McGrady |
| Ms Aine Andrews | Ms Daisy Mules |
| Mr Ivan Arbuthnot | Dr Wilfred Mulryne |
| Ms Rosemary Barton | Mr Alistair Orr |
| Mrs Susan Campbell | Mrs Thea Patton |
| Mrs Frances Donnelly | Mr John Pollock |
| Mr Charles Glenn | Mr Peter Scott |
| Mrs Teresa Graham | Mr Keith Smith |
| Mrs Miriam Karp | Mrs Audrey Stewart |
| Mr Tony Lappin | Mr Gordon Topping |
| Mr Dominic McElholm | Mr Damian Walls |

In Attendance:

Mr Eddie McArdle (Registrar, GTCNI)
Mrs Yvonne McCool (Corporate Services Manager, GTCNI)
Mr Barnaby Ball (Policy & Registration Manager, GTCNI)
Mr Gerry Devlin (Senior Education Officer, GTCNI)
Ms Deirdre Lavery (Finance & Administration Officer, GTCNI)
Mrs Carol Bailie (Minute Secretary)
Ms Lesley Dickson (PA to the Registrar, GTCNI)
Mrs Debra Castles (Communications Officer, GTCNI)
Mr Tom Hamilton (Director of Educational Policy, GTCS)
Mr Will Haire (Permanent Secretary for Education)
Ms Rose Morrow (Department of Education)
Mr Paul Sloan (Department of Education)

Apologies:

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| Ms Dorothy Black | Rev Lee Glenny |
| Dr Leslie Caul | Mr John Kerr |
| Mr John Colgan | Dr Theo Laverty |
| Mr Joe Corrigan | Mr Brendan McConville |
| Mr Malachy Doherty | Mrs La'Verne Montgomery |

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted.

2. COUNCIL MINUTES (GTC/06/Min19)

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved; proposed by Mrs Teresa Graham and seconded by Ms Rosemary Barton.

3. MATTERS ARISING

None.

4. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed Mr Tom Hamilton, Director of Educational Policy from GTC Scotland and Ms Rose Morrow and Mr Paul Sloan of the Department of Education to the meeting.

The Chair congratulated Mr Alistair Orr for being elected Vice-Chairperson. She informed members that Mr Paddy Kinney has resigned from Council as he has been appointed Chairperson of Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment.

The Chair also thanked all GTCNI Officers for the preparation of Council and Committee papers.

5. OFFICERS' BUSINESS

The Registrar indicated that under RPA there were proposals to establish a new Education Advisory Forum. Officers had held discussions with officials as to the possible make up of that body and were informed that a consultation paper would issue in due course.

The Registrar went on to report that with the appointment of a new Minister for Education, Ms Catriona Ruane, there existed new opportunities to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the politicians and the Assembly on educational matters.

It was proposed and agreed that the Registrar should invite the Minister to address the next Council meeting in June. The Chair suggested that the Minister should be asked to launch the Council's new document 'Teaching the Reflective Profession' and that an early meeting should be sought with the Minister. The Registrar undertook to take these matters forward.

6. MR WILL HAIRE, PERMANENT SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL RE: RPA

The Permanent Secretary joined the meeting and then presented Council members with an update on the current situation in relation to the Review of Public Administration and identified the issues that need to be addressed. The Chairperson thanked Mr Haire for his presentation and a short question and answer session took place.

7. COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S CONSULTATION, 'SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE: A POLICY FOR SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS' (GTC20/07/P1)

The Senior Education Officer identified the main changes to the response, which emerged from discussions at the last Policy Committee meeting, and asked members for their approval. Members agreed that this should be sent as GTCNI response, proposed by Mr Alistair Orr and seconded by Mr Dominic McElholm.

8. COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S CONSULTATION 'POLICY ON SUPPORTING ETHNIC-MINORITY CHILDREN WHO HAVE ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE' (GTC20/07/P2)

The Senior Education Officer indicated that this paper had been amended by the Policy Committee. Members agreed that this should be sent as GTCNI response, proposed by Mr Charles Glenn and seconded by Mr John Pollock.

9. BUSINESS PLAN – 12 MONTH UPDATE (GTC20/07/P3)

The Registrar introduced this paper and indicated that whilst it reflected the work undertaken against specific commitments in the Annual Business Plan for 2006/07 it did not reflect the totality of the work undertaken in that period. He further noted that in the coming year(s) additional tasks would devolve to the Council which would increase pressure on staff and resources. Mr McElholm proposed a vote of thanks to officers and this was seconded by Mr Smyth. The Chair added her congratulations to the staff on the volume of work undertaken.

10. ANNUAL DIGEST OF STATISTICS AND GRADUATE ANALYSIS 2007 (GTC20/07/P4)

The Policy and Registration Manager introduced this paper and indicated that the GTCNI had published its first Digest of Statistics last year based on a census date of 31 March 2006. The Council is committed to produce 'Digests' on an annual basis and the statistics in the 2007 Digest will be presented in such a way so to facilitate comparisons with last year's statistics. The Digest will be published and distributed at the end of May.

The Registration and Policy Manager informed members that aggregated data from the register can provide useful information for many within the education service. Members expressed their thanks to the Policy and Registration Manager for compiling the Digest of Statistics. The paper was welcomed by Council members as offering a robust evidential basis for future planning and policy development. It was agreed that the registration team would explore the possibility of presenting statistics in relation to the Irish Medium sector.

11. 3 YEAR FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS (GTC20/07/P5)

The Corporate Services Manager presented the Financial Projections for the Council's Income and Expenditure for the next three years. The figures are based on a series of 'suppositions' including a decline in the teaching population, the registration fee remaining static at £44 and a notional costing of possible regulation hearings over the next three years. The figures indicated the prescience of the Council's decision to establish a robust cash reserve and strongly suggest that rising costs, allied to a potential decline in income, will create a scenario requiring the use of existing reserves by year three of the planning cycle. However, members were advised that the figures are based on particular suppositions and should not necessarily be taken to indicate imminent or potential financial problems for the Council.

**12 & 13. TEACHER COMPETENCES & THE EDUCATION (2006 ORDER)
(COMMENCEMENT NO. 1) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2007
(GTC20/07/P6)**

The Registrar outlined the proposals for competence three relating to the Irish Medium sector. The Director of Educational Policy, GTC Scotland, outlined briefly the position of the Gaelic language in their competence document. It was noted that in Scotland the standards for teaching are generic but that they were augmented in the process of course accreditation by additional guidance. Following further discussion Council endorsed a generic competence approach with the amendment to the Irish Medium competence as outlined in Annex B, proposed by Mr Dominic McElholm and seconded by Mr Alistair Orr.

The Registrar agreed that the best way forward to deal with issues raised in relation to Irish Medium sector was in the context of the new responsibilities given to the Council for the Approval of Qualifications in the 2006 Education Order. It was also agreed that the Council would work with Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta to identify best practice in this area and that arrangements would be made to examine the processes that operate in GTC Scotland and the Approval of Qualifications related to Gaelic Medium education. The Registrar undertook to organise a study visit to Scotland.

14. COMMITTEE MINUTES

(i) Audit Committee (AC/07/Min16)

Mrs Teresa Graham presented the Audit Committee minutes to Council as an accurate record of the meeting and highlighted the work which had been done in relation to contingency measures and the Council's banking facilities.

(ii) General Purposes and Finance Committee (GP&FC/07/Min19)

Mr Alistair Orr informed members that the minutes of the General Purpose & Finance Committee meeting were an accurate record of the meeting. At the last meeting the Committee had considered the finance report, the Scheme for Payment to Council members and the staffing restructure. He urged members to attend all Committee meetings after poor attendance at the last meeting.

(iii) Registration Committee (RC/07/Min16)

Mr Peter Scott presented the Registration Committee minutes to Council as an accurate record of the meeting. The Chair of the Registration Committee also stated that a work programme associated with 'Approval of Qualifications' is still the subject of discussions with DE.

(iv) Policy Committee (PC/07/Min20)

Mr Tony Lappin informed members that the minutes of the last Policy Committee were an accurate record of the meeting and briefly identified the main discussions that took place.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Risk Management Committee

The Corporate Services Manager informed members that a letter will be sent out requesting participants for the above committee in the near future.

14. VENUE, DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Council meeting will be held in the Europa Hotel, Belfast on Friday 15 June 2007.

Signed: _____ Date: _____