**(PRRC/Min/19/12)**

**Minutes of the 12th Policy, Registration and Regulation Committee**

**Thursday 23 May 2019, Albany House, Great Victoria Street, Belfast**

**Present:** Brendan Morgan (Chair), Mary Lou Winchborne, Catriona Mullan, Carmel McCartan, Áine Andrews, Cliodhna Scott Wills, David Canning, Paul O’Doherty, Clive Bowles (Observer).

**Apologies**: Gordon White, Martin Hagan, Joanne Burns, Maria Mullally, Malachy Crudden.

**In Attendance:** Sam Gallaher (CEO), Gerry Devlin (SEO), Majella Matthews (F&CM), Ned Cohen (EO – Part), Lesley Dickson (PA).

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| 1. **Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**   BM chaired and welcomed members to the meeting. He gave condolences to CMcC, MMu and MLW on the loss of members of their families.  Apologies were noted.     1. **Declarations of Interest**   There were no declarations of interest.  At this part in the meeting the SEO asked for volunteers to sit on a panel for a Review of Decision in relation to an application for registration. Members willing to do this are to contact the SEO directly.   1. **Minutes (PRRC/Min/19/11)**   The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed for accuracy.  At Page 2 MLW had asked for the CEOs letter to be circulated. The CEO said he thought it had been circulated with the Council papers but will make sure that it is circulated.  At Page 4 it was stated that the Regulatory Panel members’ conflict of interest form be brought to this meeting. The SEO circulated this.  After amendment the minutes were adopted as a true and correct record.  **Proposed by MLW and seconded by CM.**   1. **Matters Arising**   On Page 2 CMcC asked about insurance for legal indemnity and covering the cost of legal bills. The F&CM advised that she had had a meeting with Marsh Insurance Brokers in February and that we are insured for £5 million, but advised that at some point in the future the insurers may seek to settle cases early and this could drive up the premium.  The Chair enquired if the insurance brokers can set criteria for this. The F&CM said that yes they can usually; based on experience. They are aware that we are a regulator and can seek to put in clauses relating to this into our policy. The cost of our insurance is presently £2500 per year.  The CEO added that our insurance is due for renewal in September and there is a possibility that the insurers may want to use their own legal team in relation to an ongoing HR matter.  The F&CM said that Marsh is our insurance broker at present but procurement will determine who our next insurer will be and that we need a good insurer with experience.   1. **Regulation Update (including strictly confidential enclosure) (Eugene O’Loan in attendance) (PRRC/19/12/01)**   The SEO took members through this paper advising that it was a high level paper. He reminded members that in January there had been a special meeting of PRRC and Council relating to the Conduct Rules. He advised that the purpose of this paper is to provide members with an update on activity associated with professional regulation since the last Committee meeting. Members are asked to consider the actions taken over the period and emerging issues.  At its meeting on the 30 January, PRRC discussed and agreed to recommend to Council the adoption of the revised Conduct Rules with minor amendment. Subsequently, the Council formally ratified the Conduct Rules. Following this decision, GTCNI staff have proceeded with necessary actions to implement full professional regulation for the teaching profession in NI.  Through DSO, two solicitors and a Counsel from the NI Bar, who will act as Presenting Officer at conduct hearings and deal with any legal challenge – were duly appointed. This team has specialist experience in the type of work in question.  An introductory meeting between GTCNI officers and the legal team took place on 26th February where, in preparation for their assigned roles, the legal team, as part of their familiarisation, undertook to acquaint themselves with our Conduct Rules and approach to regulation as well as the underpinning legislative framework within which we operate. At a follow up meeting on 4th April, a number of matters were raised by this legal team. It was requested that these be set out in writing and we subsequently received a communication of opinion from Counsel Ms Laura McMahon on 15th April.  The matters of opinion and main issues relate to four areas.   1. Jurisdiction of the functions of the Council. 2. Limitation of Sanction. 3. Authority of Council to appoint Panels/Committees. 4. Suitability for Registration.   It is important to stress that Council (and DE) has accepted that ideally the legislation underpinning the requirement for professional regulation and our approach needs to be amended and strengthened through primary legislation and that, without a functioning Assembly at Stormont, this cannot happen in the present circumstances.  The SEO said there has to be a will for the Department to help solve the problem as they can no longer remove teachers’ eligibility. The Council has endeavoured to proceed to discharge its responsibilities in this area but problems with primary and secondary legislation have hampered us.  The legal advisers have pointed out that we could proceed to regulate but it would open us up to legal challenge. The SEO advised that the Permanent Secretary has been provided with a copy of the legal advice.  The SEO highlighted details of regulation referrals and advised that panel training would be postponed until we know how best to proceed.  The CEO outlined the meeting with the legal team saying that their advice brings into focus the weaknesses in legislation and how we could be open to legal challenge. Consideration was given at the meeting as to what action could be taken in the absence of being able to amend primary legislation, to enable regulation to proceed. It was the view of our legal team that the change in secondary legislation may be possible that would strengthen the Conduct Rules, if DE were prepared to act. The view was that sensible discussion needs to take place.  The CEO confirmed that he had written to the Permanent Secretary requesting a meeting to discuss these matters. A copy of Counsel’s opinion had been included. A meeting is to take place on 3rd June and the Chair of Council will also attend and it is intended to include Eugene O’Loan, DSO. An update on progress will be provided at the June Council meeting.  The Chair asked what this would mean for the Council in the medium and long term. The SEO said that our Conduct Rules are based on those of EWC and indicated that if matters cannot be resolved we really cannot regulate.  The CEO said that the primary legislation is very vague and therefore our authority and processes will be open to challenge especially at early stages such as investigation. Whilst without a functioning Stormont Executive it is not possible to address every deficiency, the opinion offered is that through enacting secondary legislation we should at least be able to strengthen our processes and use of independent panels.  MLW enquired if there is a process that we could manage referral cases until we could take them no further or at least to screening stage.  The EO said that we manage risk in a staged way to protect the organisation as much as possible. We are not processing cases at present and need to be careful about managing risks.  MLW noted that there is a risk to young people and said there may be merit in screening out referrals that clearly do not fall within our remit.  EO’L said people have to be informed of the process.  MLW enquired if we are from this point inactive. MLW said she was not happy to take risk and was concerned about the mounting number of cases and surely it was also in the interest of teachers to screen out cases that are clearly not within scope.  The Chair asked if we should be looking to the legal advisor to see where we go from here. The CEO advised that EO’L is our Legal Advisor from DSO and it was his personal view that we should be endeavouring to take the process as far as it could go.  EO’L said that when referred from the school we could look at the information and can decide not to proceed. We can screen out at that point before the teacher is involved. The Chair asked if teachers would know if their cases are referred.  The EO outlined details of the referral process and advised that teachers are informed. Firstly there is the referral, then registration is checked, the teacher is written to and informed of the process. The teacher is informed if the referral is subsequently screened out and he said we would be remiss not to inform them.  MLW said that if we are signing off on a 3 year old referral it is a very unsatisfactory situation  CB asked about information on who would be screened out.  EO’L advised that the Council has only one sanction and that is removal from the register which would happen only on the most serious cases. If it was not so serious then it would be screened out. He said he thought we could screen out on the basis of information received.  CB enquired if we checked if these teachers fall within the criteria of grant-aided schools or peripatetic teacher.  The EO said we get referrals when a teacher is placed on suspension and may get notices from the PSNI. If it is so serious we would not process until completion of criminal procedures. Employers always have a process but unfortunately some people do slip through the gaps. He advised caution and suggested leaving any decision or action until the discussion with DE had taken place. The Council needs assurance and risk must be managed carefully.  MLW asked if the Permanent Secretary is aware of the issues. The CEO reiterated that he has been made aware of the opinion we have received and it has been suggested that we need secondary legislation to tighten our process. As the primary legislation has weaknesses it is very likely that we will face challenge.  The Chair asked if we should continue to screen, approach the Department to seek legislation change and on that basis go ahead with regulation.  The CEO advised that the decision was taken in January to proceed with regulation and Council has known that the primary legislation was not ideal. It is important that we act lawfully more so than reasonable in our process and the new opinion casts doubt on this. We therefore need action to address what can be addressed and a timetable to get the primary legislation corrected. These will be the matters to discuss with DE.  The CEO questioned what would be the timeframe for this to occur.  The Chair said that he hoped for a decision or a willingness to be shown at the meeting on 3 June to change secondary legislation and currently this has to happen before the end of August, given certain current legislation.  EO’L said that the Permanent Secretary should still be able to exercise certain powers after August and he would think that a small piece of secondary legislation could be enacted.  DC added that if it was something which would safeguard children then it should be done quickly.  The CEO said that there would be a one item agenda at the 3 June meeting.  The Chair said it looks like it may be possible to have the secondary legislation addressed by the end of August.  MLW asked if we were planning to inform political representatives of the urgency of the situation. The CEO took the point and said this was not planned but will consider the value of the suggestion after the meeting with the Permanent Secretary first.  The Chair added that there would also be the risk of exposure for DE. The CEO responded that the Department wants us to regulate so things need to happen. The SEO advised that the Department cannot put the Council in legal jeopardy.  The CEO said that there would be two meetings with the Permanent Secretary one on 3 June and a GAR meeting on 6th June.  CMcC stated that this matter could affect our insurances also.  The SEO pointed out that our powers apply to grant aided schools but what happens if someone is on our Register but not employed in a grant aided school. They would not be included in regulation.  The Chair enquired if there is a possibility of regulation occurring this year. The CEO said this would depend on the discussion with the Department.  The Chair asked if regulation will still go ahead if primary legislation is not in place. MLW said the Council always had reservations about it.  The EO said we should just park the matter until the meeting with the Department and manage our existing caseload. We would always be likely to be subject to legal challenge. We have to act within the law and there will always be risk.  The Chair enquired what would be the earliest we could hear a case.  The EO said if we engaged the Department then we could maybe have secondary legislation in August/September, then we would have to train panel members. He stated we could hold conduct meetings but he would be nervous about any commitment. The Department had previously refused to discuss secondary legislation but if we had a positive response we could possibly hold a panel meeting in the 19/20  The Chair asked if we could have a case this year.  The EO said he would wait until the meeting with the Department.  The Chair asked if there was a mechanism to put pressure on stakeholders to help.  The CEO said he would address these with the Permanent Secretary. It is important we are involved in the process.  The SEO advised that they had good dialogue with DE and DEL but there are still gaps in our ability to subpoena witnesses and difficulty with oaths.  CB quoted the last paragraph of the legal advice and said that we need to close gaps.  The Chair summarised the matter as the CEO is to meet with the Permanent Secretary on 3 June and will ensure feedback to Council and update to Committee, and thanked EO’L for his advice.  The Chair said he had written to the CEO regarding his letter to the Permanent Secretary in which he cited “ *the Council are fully appreciative of the context”*. It was his opinion that Council are definitely not aware of the legal context as Counsel’s opinion had not been widely shared.  The CEO responded that the point he was making in this sentence was that Council are aware that the legislative framework for regulation is limited and that as the Council is not regulating there are risks, which is a true reflection.  While accepting the point the Chair felt that the way it was written the reader could infer that the Council are fully aware of the legal opinion received. He requested that the CEO make it clear to the Permanent Secretary that all Council are not aware at this stage of the legal opinion.  The CEO apologised for any confusion in his letter to the Permanent Secretary. The Chair advised that Council members must be given a full account of the legal challenges and risks faced. The CEO agreed and this indeed is happening.   1. **Accreditation Update and Recommendations (PRRC/19/12/02)**   The SEO updated members on the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programmes in N Ireland and thanked members of the panel.  He advised members that a meeting was held with the ETI on 11 March to receive feedback on the outcome of the inspections of each of the programmes. The Accreditation Committee also held three meetings: 3 May (a preparatory meeting), 13 May with St Mary’s University College and Stranmillis University College, 14 May with Ulster University and QUB.  Members of the Accreditation committee also reviewed the extensive Accreditation Portfolios submitted by each HEI. In accordance with the agreed timeline for the accreditation work stream, the process is now completed and only the final recommendations from the Accreditation Committee now need to be ratified by both PRRC and Council.  Each panel member gave a short summary of the accreditation outcomes.  CB had met with QUB and advised of questions asked and spoke on education research and competences and their view on mental health and microteaching.  AA gave details of her meeting with St Marys, advising that both Irish Medium and English projects were covered. She said the dialogue was professional but there were significant overlaps in issues. She noted that the complex challenges faced and that IMPGCE were significantly greater challenge than faced by the other HEIs. She said she found the discussion disappointing. She also felt there was no opportunity to develop issues raised and asked is the accreditation process a rubberstamping exercise.  She added that she felt it was an uncomfortable encounter and agreed to recommend accreditation it but with reservations.  The Chair asked AA how she would address these issues.  AA said that there is nothing in the competences specific for Irish Medium. There is only a 20 word descriptor.  The Chair asked how this worked in GTCS and Wales with the use of Gaelic and the Welsh language.  The SEO said that the 27 competences were published in 2007 and it probably timely that these are reviewed taking account of developments in other jurisdictions.  The CEO said that the Council could decide which direction the competence development should go. Is there a need for competence development in specific niche areas. It is important that our competence statements or frameworks benefit the profession.  AA said that the competences are relevant to Irish Medium but it is her view that there is a range of Irish Medium issues not covered by the 27.  The Chair asked if AA saw these as separate. CB enquired if this was a problem with all language teaching. AA emphasised that she was talking about immersion education. CM added that second language teaching was probably different than immersion education.  AA indicated that additional skills are needed to teach in the Irish medium context.  The Chair asked AA if she could get some of the IM group to put a paper together on IM Education for the Committee’s consideration.  In the absence of Brian McGrath (BMcG) the SEO took members through the details of his meeting with Ulster University saying that discussion included workshops and microteaching. Core staff were recruited from the teaching profession and students were assessed in relation to the GTCNI competence.  In the absence of Joanne Burns (JB) the SEO took members through her meeting with Stranmillis University advising that there was comprehensive information provided and they gave a high priority to student and staff wellbeing and professional engagement.  CMcC enquired about the 4 year B.Ed. course. The SEO said we would begin the accreditation process for these programmes during 19/20.  CSW said that general questions had been asked and the picture is not the same across the schools. There is a need to build up teacher resilience and that good practice was happening in each HEI and all the programmes reviewed had a very good retention rates.  CB added that Stranmillis had linked up with nursery children in Norway and were interested in the play aspect of their schooling.  The Chair thanked JB, GW, BMcG, CB, CSW and AA for their reports.  The SEO said he recommended to the Committee and to Council that these programmes are accredited. CMcC summarised by saying that she proposed that these are accredited and a summary goes to Council.  AA asked how to note reservations.  The SEO said that this needs to be discussed further and it would be important to maintain positive relationships with St Mary’s. He added that the accreditation process had a strict focus around whether students who successfully compete the programmes are suitable for registration. He added that the legislative basis for accreditation is weak and taking it forward depends on good relationship with the HEIs.  CB said that QUB had asked for feedback so there is an opportunity for discussion  It was proposed that these programmes be accredited.  Proposer: CMcC  Seconded: DC  DC enquired if we should make a presentation or give a certificate when accrediting  The SEO said previously, we have made formal presentations and it is intended to run a presentation event in the autumn. Presenting a certificate along with use GTCNI logo by HEIs in being considered.  **7. Leadership Competences/Ongoing Development Work**  **PRRC/19/12/03)**  The SEO took members through this paper advising that the Advisory Group had met on 4 occasions and that this paper is to provide members with an update on the ongoing development work in the leadership competences.  He advised that a new structural template is being proposed encompassing the agreed high level domains of Leading Ethos, Leading Learning and Leading Improvement. The main feature is that the competences will be presented under two further sub domains ‘Being Competent’ and ‘Showing Competence’  He directed members to the diagram developed by Dr Martin Hagan which would be brought to the Advisory Group. He said they would propose to take this forward in defining competences. He added that he proposed to bring the Writing Group together to populate the framework. He defined the differences between senior and middle leaders and asked if the Committee was content with the Writing and Advisory Groups continuing with the process.  CMcC said the showing competence aspect could provide a series of policies for schools. The Writing Group would consider each competence statement ask how this could/should be evidenced.  PO’D said the merits of the proposed framework was not totally clear to him and asked if it would not have been better to align with the teacher competences.  The SEO discussed the format and said that it was his view that stakeholders would not accept it. He said there is a resonance of philosophy which aligns the teacher competences with the leadership competences; the word alignment did not mean a presentational alignment.  The CEO added that competences are developed over a range of sectors but the common traits of any competence statement or framework is defining; what is the skill/competence, how should it be evidenced, what is the key knowledge (both general and specifc sectoral knowledge) that underpins it, and what are the values and behaviours that influence how the competence is demonstrated. What makes competences different across sectors the degree of contextualisation. This is important.  The CEO stated he was anxious about the length of time this development was taking, considering performance criteria in the Council’s 18/19 business plan. While recognising the importance getting this right and producing something of tangible use for teachers, he was concerned that rightly or wrongly DE held a view that they had commissioned this work from GTCNI. He didn’t want the Council to appear to be failing to deliver on this task. The business plan target was to be ready for consultation by March 19 and considering current status it was looking like it will be December before this work-stream is complete.  The Chair said the leadership competences could apply to possibly 70/80% of teachers. CB enquired where on the pay scales are middle/senior leaders mentioned. The CEO said that a middle leader had responsibility for a specific function within a school while a senior leader has a level of whole organisation responsibility. The SEO said that he sees these roles being supportive of teachers giving a sense of direction. CB said that middle/senior leaders are given job descriptions and this will provide backup  The SEO emphasised that the proposed leadership competences are to be regarded as progressive and developmental.  CMcC stressed the importance of shared leadership.  CM enquired if this work would inform a programme like PQH. The SEO concurred and said that EA are awaiting completion of this work in order that it inform the develop leadership programmes.  CMcC enquired if this would go out to consultation. The EO said it would in the autumn.  *The EO left the meeting.*  **8. Analysis of Budget Options 2019/20-2021/22 (PRRC/19/12/04)**  The CEO advised members that this paper was going through each Committee to help the Council set direction and agree a Corporate Plan. He reminded members that the Council was operating in a context where, it had three main statutory functions to deliver, income is flat-lining and costs increase annually, progressing regulation will bring significant additional cost pressures, its allocated budget for 19/20 is the same as 18/19, its sponsor department DE was had a challenging financial position – unlikely to change in the short-term and the Council needs to determine how it intends to use it reserves. Officers have simulated a number of budget scenarios to inform strategic decisions.  The F&CM took members through the table of Options, highlighting the differences in each.  The CEO stressed that with Option 1 and 2 (operating within its allocated budget) the Council would struggle to progress and fulfil its three main statutory responsibilities with activity in the area of promoting professionalism and engaging with the profession significantly curtailed  With Option 3 he said the Council would seek to use its reserves in a measured way over the period whilst covering contingent liabilities. This approach would allow the Council to progress in a manner desired and fufil all statutory functions. It would also afford time to consider income sources for the longer term.  The F&CM provided members with figures relating to the database, website, pension fund, election and general reserves. The CEO said that the aim would be to ensure the Council can cover its contingent liabilities,  The Chair indicated that Option 3 was the preferred Option. The CEO advised that it was Council to set the direction for the organisation but draft Corporate Plan that reflected discussion at previous Council meetings had been drafted around Option 3. With this option there is no requirement to increase fees and it affords time to consider how financial sustainability can be maintained over the longer term. He added that this discussion was a pre-cursor to discussion at Council. The CEO added that the Corporate Plan would also have to be approved by DE as would any access to reserves.  CB added that teachers do not want fees to go up. The Chair asked why not have an Option 1a where could dip deeper into our reserves. The CEO said that is possible but in his opinion it would still not address some of the issues.  The Chair asked about applying for more resources at Option 1. The CEO said that Option1 is living within our allocated budget for 19/20 and what is likely in subsequent years.  The Chair said there is a need to show teachers what we are doing. The CEO responded that registration and regulation are only two of the Council’s statutory functions, the other being promoting professionalism. It would be his view that teachers are likely to judge GTCNI more by its activity in the latter. The costs associated with a move to regulation in the present context will significantly compromise this aspect of our work. Choosing Option 1 we will essentially switch from registration and promoting professionalism to registration and regulation.  CM said we do not need to spend additional money in the short term.  The CEO said Option 3 simulates using our reserves and it is not saying we will increase the fees in 3 years. He explained that it does reflect moving to a settled staff structure and recruiting to the current communications vacancy. He outlined the posts which would be filled and why.  CB informed members that at the F&GP Committee Options 2 and 4 had been crossed out and the Committee had been deliberated between options 1 & 3.  No firm conclusion was reached or consensus view expressed. The CEO indicated that subject of corporate plan and strategic direction would be discussed at Council    **9. Draft Corporate Plan 2019-2022 (PRRC/19/12/05)**  The CEO highlighted this paper for comment and said it would be important that a direction and objectives are agreed and signed off at the next Council meeting as we are now almost a quarter into the 19/20 year. He advised that he considered this it an important legacy from this Council to the next. He highlighted the 5 key corporate objectives for the next 3 years and asked for members’ views.  The Chair asked for an explanation of bullet point 2 referring to guidance on competences.  The CEO said that in his considered opinion there is a need for guidance as to the value of GTCNI teacher competences and how they can/should be used constructively by teachers to inform professional development and by other stakeholders, if only to avoid/limit their misuse. Teachers would welcome such guidance.  The Chair asked who would be doing this. The CEO said it would be ourselves with this Committee providing oversight.  AA enquired if this would be possible with all Options. The CEO said it may all be possible over a longer time, but any suggested work programme will the subject to available resources.  The Chair enquired about the Code of Professional Practice. The SEO advised that GTCS and EWC both have codes of professional practice. He advised that a Code of Conduct goes down the non-maleficence approach. It is for Council to determine the need and this Committee will provide oversight. The CEO added the most professional bodies have such a code.  The Chair asked if this would be tied into regulation. The SEO advised that such a code may support regulation.  The CEO asked members that if they had any feedback or comments to forward them to him.  **10. Draft Business Plan 2019-2020 (PRRC/19/12/06)**  The CEO outlined the Draft Business Plan and said it was sent for consideration.  PO’D highlighted governance issues and asked about a staff handbook and also if new Council members could have a Handbook, especially the F&GP committee.  The CEO advised he would be considering induction arrangements for the new Council over the summer months.  **11. Business Plan – 2018-2019 Out-turn (PRRC/19/12/07)**  The CEO advised members that the Business Plan had been sent to the Department.  **12. Election Update (Oral)**  The SEO advised that the electoral roll had been established. The nomination period opened on 26 April and closes on 28 June. The next stage is the closing of the nomination period, the manifestos and then the issue of ballots.  **13. Rest of World Fees – Summary Paper (PRRC/19/12/08)**  The SEO advised that we were taking forward the RoW process. This makes a heavy demand on resources. He said that, building on the piece of work completed in February 2018, it was agreed that further work would be completed to determine the true cost (including overheads) associated with registering non-UK applicants, with a view to full cost recovery.  Drawing on the summary paper the SEO stated that the number of non-UK applicants is low and analysis indicates an individual cost of £1500 to process such applications. This process may be improved eventually with a new regulation system but it was clear that achieving full cost recovery is unlikely. SMT had considered the analysis and were of the view that an assessment fee of £500 should be introduced to offset associated costs. effective from 2019/20.  The CEO said that registration fees would remain the same as the proposal is to introduce an assessment fee payable in all circumstances for RoW applicants.  No confirmation of agreement by members was recorded.  **14. AOB**  The CEO advised he had been approached by Prof. Linda Clarke of the Ulster University regarding research Manchester University are undertaking on behalf of an authority in Wales. The research is focusing on newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and is seeking to gain insight into their initial teaching experience. Prof Clarke has asked GTCNI to help facilitate this research by issuing a survey. In return GTCNI would receive the NI data and the final report benchmarking NI NQTs experience with those in other parts of the UK. He said that in his opinion such information would be insightful and useful for Council aiding our understanding of the profession locally. This would be obtained at no cost. The CEO asked if members thought this would be worthwhile.  AA enquired re the facilitating role. The CEO advised the focus is on teachers who qualified in 2018 and our role would be to simply send out an email request and follow up reminders. The Chair asked if we have the email addresses. The CEO advised that we do and responses would go directly to Manchester University.  AA advised she would like to see what they are looking for. The CEO said it was nothing contentious and they are looking for the survey to be undertaken in June.  AA asked if officers were happy. The SEO said he would like to see the questionnaire. The FC&M asked if we would need to consult DE on such a survey. The CEO said he did not think so as it was consulting with the profession and thought DE was already aware of this research. The SEO advised that we get an annual request from the Department asking what surveys we have carried out during the year.  DC questioned how this would be affected by data protection. The CEO said there would be no problem as we are not passing details to any third party.  The Chair asked if there would be no data protection issues and AA said we would need to see something more robust.  The CEO added that all we are being asked to do doing is sending out an email request. This was just a request from UU to facilitate. If members are not comfortable we will not proceed. He passed to the Chair the paperwork.  The Chair asked if this was all the documentation involved. The CEO said that it outlined what was involved  AA said we have never acted as a post box and was concerned that we are acting as a conduit for an outside organisation. CM said there is a need for a protocol to deal with such requests. The SEO felt the timing is not good and he would need to check on data protection.  PO’D added that he thought not accommodating research requests like this was a missed opportunity and as an organisation we should be more flexible. We need to develop a protocol what to do when approached by external organisations.  The CEO said we would gain useful insight to an important aspect of teaching that could inform our work. It is a significant piece of research and Council recognise there is a need for us to engage with the profession. We will do some work internally on a protocol but will decline involvement at this time.  **15. Date of next meeting - TBA**  Dates will decided over the summer months. There will be a transition period for the new Council.  PO’D highlighted the need for teachers to be able to attend committees.  The SEO said teachers would know what the commitment would be from the election documentation and should speak to their principal. He advised he had had a meeting with the management side recently and raised this matter.  The Chair thanked everyone.    Signed………………………….. Dated ……………………………. | Action    All  CEO  Action |