

**NCSE Council Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2018**  
**106<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council**

**Trim Castle Hotel, Trim**

- Attendance:** Council Members  
Eamon Stack (Chairperson)  
Sheelagh Drudy (Deputy Chairperson)  
Eithne Fitzgerald  
Helen Guinan  
Joe Hayes  
Don Mahon  
Marion Meany  
Johnny Murphy  
Tom O'Sullivan  
Finian O'Shea  
Anne Tansey
- Apologies** Antoinette Nic Gearailt  
Áine Lynch
- Also in Attendance:** Teresa Griffin, Chief Executive (present items 1- 14)  
Mary Byrne, PO (present items 1- 7 & 13)  
Jennifer Doran, PO & Board Secretary (present items 1- 14)  
Niall Feeney A/PO (present items 1- 13)  
Ray Jordan PO (present items 1- 6)

- 1. Reminder – Declaration of interests (standing governance item)**  
The Chairperson reminded members about declaring interests, as per the Code of Conduct for Council members. There were no items to declare.  
  
Council members congratulated Teresa Griffin on her successful re-appointment as CEO.
- 2. Draft Minutes of the meetings on 21<sup>st</sup> February and 15<sup>th</sup> March and matters arising**  
The minutes of the two previous meetings were accepted and there were no matters arising.
- 3. Chief Executive Report**  
The report was circulated in advance to members. A number of further updates were provided on the day.
  - The SNA allocations process and the three year review are almost concluded. There is a demand for around 800 posts, which will leave around 200 posts for allocation for the remainder of the year. This level of demand is comparable to previous years. It was suggested to include an explanatory note in the annual report to explain the increase in SNA numbers, i.e. demographics. It was also suggested that when analysing the data from the three year review, a breakdown by age and other profile information would be helpful.

- A progress report on the Work Plan was circulated with the CEO report and Council noted that the Work Plan is on target in relation to all items.

#### 4. **Key NCSE Priorities-3- 5 years & Change Management**

A presentation on priorities for the NCSE over the next three to five years along with an update on change management within the organisation was provided.

**A discussion on possible advice being sought by the DES took place. Please note that this is under the deliberative process and the detail will be published when the nature of advice sought is confirmed.**

#### 5. **NCSE Expanded Roles- Disability Act**

A presentation on the possible implications for the NCSE arising out of the Disability Act was provided.

**Please note that the discussion on the implications is under the deliberative process and the detail will be published when the implications have been clarified.**

#### 6. **Developing Innovative Practice**

A presentation was provided outlining how we currently support teachers and principals. The views of Council were sought on how we might enhance this under the new support services and to identify any known innovative practices.

- It was suggested to look at the results of the ITE for Inclusion research as it identifies issues teachers noted with regard to professional development.
- Having mentors for practice development was suggested.
- It would be important to link with the Teaching Council and their framework for professional development.
- It was suggested to consider working with one of the universities/colleges of education to build capacity and access expertise.
- It was noted that there is evidence that once off presentations to teachers are not effective in changing practice and that on-going CPD is more effective when learning is applied and reflected upon. It is important that there is an evidence base to the practices to ensure they are effective. The Centre for Effective Services may be useful to link with in this regard.
- Good practice in other countries may not work here as we need to adapt for the Irish context in terms of cultural and systems issues.
- The NCCA are doing work on exemplifying good practice in curriculum for children with SEN so it would be helpful to link in with them.

#### 7. **Updates on the SNA Comprehensive Review and In-School Therapy Project**

##### **7.1 SNA Review**

The policy advice was submitted to the Minister in March 2018 on schedule. The report is ready to go to print. Work continues on finalising the costing estimates for the proposed new model.

It is expected that the launch will take place in late May (date to be confirmed), which will involve a stakeholder briefing session. The communications strategy on the day is being finalised.

## **7.2 In-School Therapy Project**

The DCYA have confirmed their involvement in the project. It is expected that there will be around 75 pre-schools included linked to the primary schools in the project.

The recruitment of the therapy posts will commence in the coming weeks. They will be employed by the HSE but will be allocated solely to the project. The NCSE will pay the HSE for the salary and other non-pay costs.

It is expected the project will be launched on the 14<sup>th</sup> May, subject to confirmation.

## **8. Strategy and Policy Committee Report**

The three pamphlets on post-school options for school leavers and adults with disabilities have been published on the NCSE website and printed copies are being prepared to be circulated to stakeholders.

## **9. Audit and Risk Committee Report**

There was no meeting of the A&R Committee since the previous Council meeting and there is nothing new to report.

## **10. Finance Committee Report**

The Finance Committee met in advance of the Council meeting.

### **10.1 Draft Accounts**

The Chairs of the Finance Committee, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Council Chair met in March to review the accounts of the SESS and NBSS at the instruction of the Council. The accounts were signed off at this meeting pending one clarification, which was subsequently received. A note of this meeting has been circulated with the papers.

Council noted that the accounts were submitted to the C&AG and that the C&AG audit commenced on 26<sup>th</sup> April.

### **10.2 2018 Budget & Expenditure**

The Finance Committee raised the concerns previously highlighted at the last Council meeting regarding the shortfall in the DES budget allocation to the NCSE to operate the full programme of work. The shortfall is approximately €876,000 in non-pay as per the estimates currently.

The Executive must prepare an operational budget on the basis of the funding provided. This will require the prioritisation of expenditure and an assessment of the impact on services. The Executive will relay this information to the DES in discussions on remedying the shortfall in the budget allocation.

The NCSE is awaiting financial advice on the issue with regard to the €2m allocated for the In-School Therapy project being allocated entirely to non-pay in error. The DES acknowledged this error in their letter of allocation. Council noted that this issue is still outstanding and that a further update will be provided at the next meeting.

Council noted the issues again and the plans to engage in further discussion with the DES on the matter. A full report will be provided in June.

### **10.3 Governance Statement and Council Members' Report**

The draft statement was circulated with the papers and is a new requirement under updated Guidelines for the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

Council approved the statement.

#### **11. Research Committee Report**

A note of the meeting was circulated with the papers and the Chair summarised the content of the note.

It was noted that the Committee had recommended that Council consider the implications arising for the NCSE as a result of the state signing the UN Convention. It was agreed that this would be an item on the agenda of one of the remaining Council meetings.

The findings from the evaluation of the Research Conference last year was circulated and noted.

It was suggested that the focus on lifelong learning for this year's conference could incorporate a transition and planning theme. One of the suggestions from the evaluation report was to have more people with disabilities on a panel and this is something that can be achieved with the conference theme for this year. Council suggested we consider technology options for the questions and answers sessions.

#### **12. 2017 Annual Report**

A draft of the Annual Report was circulated with the papers. Some additional data is still outstanding, such as trend data since 2011.

It was suggested to include footnotes with some of the figures to explain variation or growth, such as demographics and a growing population.

In Appendix 3, a footnote should be included to indicate that the 10,000 pupils is a rounded estimate.

The detail of attendance at the Research Committee meetings needs to be updated.

Council approved the Annual Report subject to these amends and the inclusion of the outstanding trend data.

#### **13. Next Council Skills and Knowledge**

The note circulated with the papers outlined the PAS process for appointing a new Council.

**Please note this discussion is under the deliberative process and the detail will be published when the specification is published on PAS.**

#### **14. AOB**

13<sup>th</sup> June is the date for the next Council meeting and this will take place in Knightsbrook hotel rather than Trim Castle hotel.

The contract for the external review of Council performance has been awarded to Mazars. It is expected that there will be time allocated at the June meeting to address this.

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**Eamon Stack**  
**Chairperson**  
**13<sup>th</sup> June, 2018**

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**Teresa Griffin**  
**Chief Executive**  
**13<sup>th</sup> June, 2018**