

**MINUTES OF THE C2K PROJECT BOARD MEETING HELD AT
C2K HEADQUARTERS
THURSDAY 4TH MARCH 2010**

Present:

Mr B Mulholland	WELB (Chair)
Mr J Stewart	C2k
Mr G Byrne	ESA ICT
Mr R Hanna	CCEA
Mrs S Lawler	DE
Mr J Mullen	ETI
Mr F Devenny	CCMS
Mr P Monaghan	St Oliver Plunkett Primary School
Mr R Harper	NEELB

In Attendance:

Mr J Ringland	C2k Contracts & Finance Manager, C2k
Ms M Kane	Implementation and Communications Manager, C2k
Mrs G Hall	C2k (Secretary)

Apologies:

Dr S Lucey	BECTA
Mr E McArdle	GTCNI
Mr J Wilkinson	Dromore High School
Mr P Mackey	WELB

802 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12th JANUARY 2010

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed as accurate.

803 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 794

Declaration of Interests

This action is now completed.

Minute 794

InCAS

Mr Hanna reported that CCEA had sent a letter to Katrina Godfrey on 23rd December 2009 with its recommendation regarding the extension of the contract with CEM. He stated that CCEA is still awaiting a response from DE on whether to extend the InCAS contract as recommended or to make some other arrangement. He understood that a decision would be made at a meeting next Wednesday, which will be chaired by Dr. Robson Davison. Mr Hanna expressed concern that it would be extremely demanding to get the software into schools within the timescales available as development meetings could not be pursued with CEM pending this decision.

The Chair referred to costs incurred with recent performance issues in relation to InCAS and how this was being pursued with CEM. The Director advised that he had written on behalf of WELB and CCEA to Paulina Lubacz, the Treasurer at the University of Durham, in February, providing a statement of actual costs incurred by schools and CCEA in having to re-run elements of the programme and seeking recovery of these costs from CEM. Ms Lubacz wrote back, requesting a copy of the KPMG audit report

which had been commissioned by CCEA, in advance of them agreeing a settlement figure. The Director noted that the report has not yet been issued to the University.

Mr Ringland reported on communications between him and Mark Fegan at CCEA, and a formal 'hold harmless' letter had been produced by KPMG which had to be signed up to by organisations other than CCEA as a condition of receiving a copy of the report. A version of this letter had already been signed by DE.

Mr Hanna confirmed that DE has had sight of the report and was of the view that CEM could have access to the full report. CCEA would provide the Director with a version of the 'hold harmless' letter to forward to CEM for signature.

Action 1: The Director and Mr Ringland to liaise with CCEA to take forward on behalf of WELB and will respond to Ms Lubacz, requesting that she signs a copy of the letter in order to release the KPMG report to Durham University.

As a point of accuracy, the Chair pointed out that the costs referred to above are direct additional costs that schools had to incur as a result of the errors, for example, additional parents' evenings, additional substitute cover, etc. This was confirmed by Mr Hanna. The Director noted that, as a result of the potential delays associated with the extension to InCAS, C2k has placed on hold a development request to Capita to commission some work to automatically import the InCAS results into the Assessment Manager software. The Director added that it is unlikely, even if the work were to be commissioned now, that it would be delivered in the software upgrade required for the next round of InCAS assessments. The Director, therefore, suggested formally awaiting the decision from DE on whether the contract will be extended or not, before making a commitment to this spending. This course of action was agreed.

Mr Hanna advised, for members' information, that one of the actions for DE arising from last autumn was the establishment of a working group, made up of practitioners and chaired by Professor John Gardner from QUB, to look at the impact of the errors from last year on the system. He noted that the group has met once to date and it is expected that they will publish a report of their findings. The Chair would be interested in seeing the report, noting that confidence and credibility from schools' perspective has been affected by the errors.

Minute 794

Finance Report

The Director advised that the Finance Report was not on the agenda today as there is another Project Board meeting scheduled for later in the month which will deal specifically with the out-turn position for 2009/10 and the budget for 2010/11. The Chair noted that indications from DE were that the budget allocations for the ELBs were originally to be communicated the week beginning 15th March, but he has since been advised that this may not now be the case. He noted that this would present real difficulties for ELBs, and therefore for C2k, to agree their budgets and present them to DE within the timescales. He stated that a discussion with the Western Board in relation to their budget will not take place until 18th March. The Chair added that a budget must formally be agreed by DE by 31st March to allow WELB to function as a legal entity.

The Chair advised that convergence plans, in terms of their potential for savings with regard to the budget, are also being looked at.

The Director stated that Mr Ringland is already working on a budget plan that takes into account the unavoidable expenditure for the next year but, although some initial indication has been given from DE as to the likely cuts in the C2k allocation, a budget

scheme for 2010/11 could not be finalised until a firm allocation figure is provided. Mr Ringland hoped to be in a position to present a budget scheme, or at least a statement of inescapable commitments, at the next Project Board meeting on 25th March.

Minute 794

Project Board ToR

There was some discussion at the last meeting of the Project Board around the governance arrangements of C2k in the context of ESA. The Chair had advised that accountability would remain within the remit of the WELB and that the interim board of seven members would oversee arrangements until a new board was constituted and operational. The Chair reported that, as a result of the slow progression being made with regard to the constitution of new transitional boards, the interim board would continue to operate in the Western Education and Library Board and other Boards, until such time as the transitional Boards are in place.

Minute 795

User Management Service

The Director wrote to Mrs Lawlor following the last Project Board meeting, asking if there was a mechanism whereby DE could regularise the flow of information from GTCNI to C2k to allow the population of the LNI system. Mrs Lawlor had responded, stating that she would have to explore in more detail with DE the implications of this. The Chair queried if there was a timeframe that DE could give in relation to C2k obtaining a response. Mrs Lawlor noted that there was not as yet. The Director stated that the UMS was initiated as part of the action plan that followed the LNI review whereby as wide a range of teachers as possible could be facilitated with access to the LNI service.

Minute 796

Unique Learner Number

Discussion took place on the Unique Learner Number and the Unique Pupil Number which Mr Mullen raised.

The Director advised that significant effort had been put into ensuring that there is continuity of the UPN throughout a pupil's life. He added that work has been done with the Boards and ESA where eSchools now captures the UPN to allow for a single identifier for all pupils.

The value of both the ULN and UPN was recognised and it was agreed that they be kept on future agendas.

Mr Mullen then raised the issue of pupils not being able to access FE Colleges learning environments from within the C2k service. Ms Kane stated that there should not be any issue for pupils accessing the learning environment through the web but advised that there would be an issue around the management of identities - this is something that is outside of C2k's remit and would require the FE colleges adopting standards and interoperability.

Mrs Lawlor asked if it would be possible to give pupils single sign-on access to college environments. The Director stated that this is something that C2k is exploring with CCEA and explained that CCEA use a Moodle environment which will be used to deliver elements of professional development, and CCEA along with C2k, have agreed a pilot plan to allow single sign-on which would take a teacher right through from logging into the C2k system and onto the Moodle environment. This uses a facility called Shibboleth and the Director's view was that this type of service could be extended to FE colleges. Ms Kane advised that there are issues around data protection and data transfer. Mr

Mullen asked if it could be resolved at a Learning Community level. Ms Kane stated that in Lot 7, part of C2k's considerations will be the ability to access external content and resources that adhere to standards.

With regard to the pilot work between CCEA and C2k, Mr Hanna advised that it was already raising issues around data protection and stated that this piece of work would raise a number of issues in relation to policy and permissions and access to data and, which in his view would have to be dealt with at policy level. Ms Kane stated that Shibboleth is designed to allow users a single sign on.

Mr Mullen again advised that some pupils participating in FE courses were being denied access to the related learning environment resources within their schools and queried if a pilot could be arranged between a college and a learning community. Ms Kane's view was that these pupils should have no problem accessing the learning environment resources, stating that they could log in from the internet. The Chair invited Mr Mullen to identify any specific issues around pupil access that he was aware of.

Action 2: Mr Mullen to identify any issues around FE pupil access to learning environment resources from schools.

Minute 798

Contingency issues

Following a letter to the Chair from the Permanent Secretary, Mr Will Haire, seeking assurances around the contingency arrangements for the delivery of Lot 7 services, the contingency arrangements were reviewed and shared with DE and ESA. The Chair expressed concern at the delay in receiving a reply and he invited feedback now from DE. Mrs Lawlor stated that the Lot 7 procurement work at DE has been passed over to the Investment and Infrastructure team, led by Ms Anne Conaty, and Mrs Lawlor will be meeting with her next week to discuss the contingency arrangements. Mr Byrne undertook to acknowledge acceptance of the contingency arrangements on behalf of ESA.

Mrs Lawlor added that Ms Conaty will join the Project Board for future meetings. The Director noted that if an early meeting could be facilitated with Ms Conaty then she could be briefed on all the issues around the procurement. Mrs Lawlor agreed to take this forward.

Mr Ringland noted that C2k would need to have early notice of any business case process implications which DE may consider necessary in taking forward any aspect of the proposed contingency arrangements.

Minute 800

Education Futures Workshop

The Director noted that the presentation from the Education Futures Workshop, provided by Mr Stevenson from Cisco, was circulated to members for their information. He added that the workshop well received and stimulated a lot of discussion and the feedback from attendees was that they found it valuable at a strategic and policy level.

804 HIGHLIGHT REPORT

Lot 3 extension

The Director reported that the hardware rollout has been completed in respect of the Lot 3 extension service to all Post primary and Special schools. The Director wrote to the

Managing Director at Northgate to thank them for the efficiency with which they carried out the refresh and with very little disruption to schools.

SIMS Census Software development

The Director noted that up to now the SIMS software has been the route through which C2k has delivered the Census Return each year and a version of that software is being developed for 2010. The original plan was that that would be a contingency arrangement to allow eSchools to be the primary source of Census material in 2010. The Director reported that, although eSchools will be able to deliver that functionality in 2010, the Census Return will be an essential back up for the Department. As well as this, the Director underlined the need for a contingency plan for 2011 also and the Census module would need to be developed in a 2011 version. It was agreed that this contingency arrangement should be extended to the 2011 process. The Director noted that he and Mr Ringland will discuss with SIMS the licensing and commercial arrangements for next year in respect of this.

There were no questions from members in relation to the highlight report.

805 REPORTING TO PARENTS' SURVEY

The Director advised that this survey was conducted by C2k in respect of the reporting round done in the summer of 2009.

The Director then highlighted some of the key findings:

1. Almost 99% of schools surveyed had produced their reports using some element of the C2k system. The Director added that the investment by DE in terms of providing technology to schools is clearly being reflected in the fact that virtually every report is produced on an electronic system.
2. Only 41% of schools used Sims Assessment profiles module for reporting with 55% using Word. The Director noted that the bigger schools tend to have been using Word templates for quite some time and therefore are quite slow to change. The analysis showed that Belfast schools (which tended to be large Primaries) were particularly high users of Word. The Southern Board, where there were smaller Primaries, showed significant use of the other modules.
3. The alternative modules to the Word template offered to schools included two reporting tools that sit within the SIMS product – one which sits within a product called Profiles which is specifically for pupil reporting and that has comment bank facilities, etc. The Director noted that CCEA had worked with C2k on the development of comment banks that were appropriate to the reporting round for Primaries over the past couple of years. The other product that was made available to schools last year, particularly for reporting, was the Assessment Manager module, which was used to record assessments, though it does have a reporting functionality. Schools were offered training in the use of Assessment Manager for Assessment reporting also. While there is an approach to logging in from home, it is not universally available to every teacher at present, therefore, Profiles required the user to be on site. The Assessment module offered a mechanism of working offline where the user could download the assessment

template to their laptop which they could then take home and it could be synchronised with the system later.

4. The biggest issue that schools raised was more flexibility in terms of being able to work at home. The Director advised that there is an option for home working though it would be expensive, costing £80.00 per device to allow a teacher to work at home. C2k will, therefore, provide ongoing support for schools to move forward their use of Profiles and Assessment in this round of reporting and will encourage more schools to move from Word into the Assessment or Profiles tool. The Director stated that, at the same time, C2k is looking at Lot 7 as a mechanism of delivering universal home access to teachers as a core part of the service and once that is in place there will be the potential to access these types of resources from anywhere. He stated that the concept of trying to move the SIMS product forward in such a way that it becomes an online service is more likely to be driven through the Lot 7 procurement than through paying for additional ad hoc developments.

The Director stated that the survey report was shared with the Strategic Steering Group and would be circulated to the C2k/CCEA/DE Joint Strategic Group.

There were no questions or comments from members.

806 USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Ms Kane circulated three survey reports – one for Primary, Post primary and Special schools. As indicated to the Project Board in previous years, she advised that an annual survey is carried out to assess the schools' level of satisfaction with the C2k service as a whole and identify areas where improvement of the service may be pursued. As part of the annual process, there is a need to measure satisfaction with services for which contractors have direct responsibility against a contractual set of indicators. Members of the C2k Management Board review the survey questions each year to ensure ongoing relevance, C2k conducted the survey online through C2k Exchange and by post, and this took place in May/June 2009. With regard to the way the survey is designed and responses sought, Ms Kane advised that the school Principal is asked to submit a consolidated response on behalf of all staff. She expressed her appreciation to schools for completing the survey and for the level of response.

Ms Kane then gave an overview of the key messages from the survey:

1. In general, there was a high level of customer satisfaction across most aspects of the service.
2. There were some areas of dissatisfaction, for example, speed of computers, which Ms Kane noted has since been addressed in Post primaries since the survey was conducted by way of the equipment refresh, though she observed that the speed of broadband may still be an issue for some schools.
3. Ms Kane noted that Primary schools' expectations are rising all the time and two key messages arising from the report were speed of computers and reliability of laptops (battery life and wireless connection) and ability to customise their environment.

4. A recurring theme for Primaries is the fact that they do not have enough time to carry out management tasks.
5. One of the major concerns for Primaries is the fact that a teacher may be in class and unavailable when an engineer comes out to the school. As well as this, Primaries would prefer more support during a visit than what engineers are able to provide under the service level agreements. A recurring theme is the fact that they do not have a dedicated resource to manage their system.
6. Catalogue prices are also an area of concern for Primaries.
7. Broadband is not as critical an issue for Primaries as it is for Post primaries. A common theme from the survey is that teachers would like wider access to internet sites.
8. With regard to the LNI section, Primaries would like to see more teacher training and more time to get to know the environment. They would also like to see more resources relevant to the Curriculum being made available.
9. Password policy is a significant issue and difficult to manage for Primary schools.
10. Less internet filtering for teachers.
11. High level of satisfaction with the Northgate service and with the C2k helpdesk service.
12. Reporting – access outside of school and the learning curve.
13. More training for teachers.
14. The main benefits that Primary schools have derived from the C2k service include:
 - availability of help and support;
 - the range of up to date technology and resources, including Internet access;
 - the managed service and its reliability; and
 - access to information and improved administration through MIS.

With regard to the LNI part of the survey, Mr Mullen was of the view that the member of school staff who fills in the survey should be identified in order to ascertain if they are a teacher. Ms Kane's view was that this survey was not the mechanism to find out that type of information as it is a school based survey and noted that a separate survey for teachers/staff could be undertaken.

Mr Devenny felt that the survey should be completed by appropriate staff in order to obtain a broader response i.e. each sub-section directed to particular staff.

Mr Monaghan acknowledged the validity of the process but was of the view that teachers should be targeted in the survey. The Director stated that the vehicle for a teachers' survey would be through C2k Exchange as opposed to the annual survey that is required as part of the contractual mechanisms. He invited proposals from members on how this and other more focussed surveys might be structured in the future.

Mr Hanna indicated that, while he welcomed the survey overview, he would like to have had sight of the reports in advance of the meeting. He referred to the fact that questions have to be agreed with the service provider. Mr Ringland stated that only the benchmark sub-set of questions are agreed with the service provider, covering the areas which they are specifically responsible for under their contract, and he noted that this is a relatively small sub-set of the overall set of survey questions.

The Director stated that the purpose of the overview was to present the main findings, allow members to contextualise the survey and discuss it at a future meeting.

The Chair concluded that the report would be discussed at a future meeting.

Action 3: Recommendations from members in respect of how the user satisfaction survey might be structured in the future.

Action 4: Secretary to circulate the three reports, the survey analysis and PowerPoint used at today's meeting.

807 ADVISERS' PROCUREMENT UPDATE

Mr Ringland stated that the Advisers' bids were received on the due date of Friday 26th February and he advised that six bids were received by the due date, 3 for the Legal Advisory Services procurement and 3 for the Strategic Financial and Technical Advisory Service procurement. He advised that tender documents had been distributed to members of each Evaluation Panel and that proposal evaluation is underway. Mr Ringland stated that each Evaluation Panel will initially carry out a non-monetary evaluation across a wide range of areas as set out on the Invitation to Tender followed by a separate monetary evaluation led by the WELB Procurement Officer. There will be moderation meetings of Evaluation Panels later this month at which non-monetary and monetary evaluation will be consolidated with a view to identification of preferred bidders. Mr Ringland expects to have identified the preferred bidder by early April and, after the mandatory 'standstill' period, seek Western Board approval to appoint.

There were no questions or comments from members.

808 LOT 7 PROCURMENT UPDATE

- Statement of Requirements development

Mr Ringland reported at the last meeting that the initial work of the various workstreams was progressing well. He now stated that this stage was completed and the workstream leads were currently consolidating the inputs from the separate workstreams into a single draft Statement of Requirements document. This consolidation work is almost completed and a draft will shortly be brought back to the workstream groups to ensure that the requirements are well articulated for the purposes of the initial stages of the procurement.

Mr Ringland highlighted that the purpose of the SoR document in the initiation of the procurement was to allow perspective bidders to understand the broad scope of the service to make a decision about participation in the first instance and also to be fit for purpose in order to invite initial outline proposals. The draft Statement of Requirements then becomes a dynamic document in conducting the dialogue phase of the Competitive Dialogue procedure and is finalised at the point at which final tenders are invited. He emphasised that the detail of the SoR is fleshed out and agreed in engagement with the bidders and with further input and decision support from workstream representatives during this process.

The Director advised that he had requested, through CPD, that the health check that Gateway 2 recommended, should be conducted towards the end of April

which would allow the procurement to take place in May. The Director hoped to circulate to members, towards the end of March/beginning of April, the pack of documentation that needs to go out as part of the SoR including an update of the previously circulated Project Initiation Document for the procurement stage.

Mr Mullen asked for sight of the draft SoR document. Mr Ringland stated that the intention was always that it would be presented to members after it is signed off by the workstream groups and preferably after quality assurance input from the appointed technical advisors. Ms Kane undertook to provide members with access to an area on the C2k Intranet where they could access the SoR in due course.

In terms of the workstream groups, the Director reported that Mr Anderson had written to him as chair of the Teacher ePortfolio project, requesting that the group is represented in the stakeholder engagement at the next phase, which is the evaluation phase. The Director noted that he had already formally written to a number of stakeholders, including the Inspectorate and the Teacher Training Institutes, seeking their representation in the first phase of the process. Mrs McAlister had also met with Mr Anderson and Mr McNair at a point in time when the workstream work had progressed and shared that with them. The Director suggested to Mr Anderson that he would write out again to the USET group in particular, and ask them to take account of the needs of the ePortfolio group for the next round of stakeholder engagement. Mr Anderson was satisfied with this. The Director noted that a decision was made and signed off at the beginning of the process that significant stakeholders would be invited to participate in the process.

Mr Hanna agreed with the Director, stating that the workstream groups should be representative of the principal stakeholders within the education service. He was of the view that it should be up to the particular external organisation as to who would represent them best.

809 SPARKLEBOX INVESTIGATION

The Chair reported that the Minister had asked him, as Chief Executive of the Western Board, to review what had happened in relation to Sparklebox in Northern Ireland. The Chair stated that there had been a lot of misunderstanding about Sparklebox and advised that C2k did not own or pay for the service but it was a web-based site that schools could access. He has set up a panel, including the Chief Finance Officer, the Head of WELB Audit and the Head of Corporate Services, who are investigating what has happened in relation to Sparklebox. The Chair noted that the report has to be completed by the end of March and submitted directly to the Minister, after which it will be made available to the Project Board.

Mrs Lawlor stated that the Minister will make a statement about Sparklebox in advance of the report being shared widely. The Chair hoped to speak to Dr. Robson Davison tomorrow morning about the report.

Mr Hanna stated that the Sparklebox issue highlights some challenges in relation to the content or ownership of websites and an action that CCEA took was to review all their curricular materials and removed references to web links. The Chair stated that one of the findings will centre around creating a protocol for

sharing of concerns around issues like this. Mr Monaghan agreed, stating that is very difficult to legislate for an issue such as this.

810 CONVERGENCE PLANNING

The Chair stated that the Convergence Delivery Plan has now been published and that discussions are ongoing between the organisations who would have been involved in ESA. He noted that the ELBs, Mr Boyd, Mr John McGrath and the Permanent Secretary are to meet within the next ten days to discuss the way forward. Director Designates have been asked to consider what potential there would be for convergence within their specific area. The Chair stated that the convergence plan is available on the ESA and DE websites.

811 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

812 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 25th March at 2.00pm in Ashfield.

The meeting concluded at 3.55pm.