

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee ELL (2) 08-04 (p.4)

Date: 19 May 2004

Venue: Committee Room 3&4

Title: Final Report on the Quinquennial Review of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales

Purpose

1. To consult the Committee on the Final Report on the Quinquennial Review of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales ("ACCAC"). Standing Order 9.7 provides that the subject committees shall keep under review the discharge of public functions in their field by public bodies. Following the receipt of the Committee's views on the Final Report, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning will advise the Cabinet on the Report's findings and then announce the Welsh Assembly Government's response. The intention is that there should then be an opportunity for Plenary debate before the review is finally concluded.

Recommendation

2. That the Committee comments on the findings of the Final Report at Annex A. The Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix I of the Report.

Background

3. The Quinquennial Review of ACCAC was formally commissioned by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Minister for Finance in April 2003 following consultation with Committee on the Terms of Reference.

4. The review has been carried out by Open Direction Limited, the first stage of the Review resulted in an Interim Report that was presented to the Committee in November. The Education and Lifelong Learning Minister and the Finance Minister subsequently agreed the key recommendation that the functions of ACCAC continue to be needed and ACCAC should be retained as an Assembly Sponsored

Public Body. They also commissioned the second stage of the review, covering strategic effectiveness and corporate governance.

The Final Report

5. The final Report is attached at Annex A. It makes 25 recommendations, set out in the Executive Summary (pp 3-5). The findings of the review result from a wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders and partners as well as within ACCAC. The overall conclusion of the report is that ACCAC is efficiently run and is strongly supported by its Members and staff. ACCAC has a positive reputation amongst its closest peer bodies and the Assembly Government.

The report also looks at corporate governance and found that financial and management control arrangements were soundly managed and internal and external audit reports were satisfactory.

6. As with any organisation, there are aspects of its operation which could be strengthened. A number of themes come through from the recommendations: that ACCAC's roles and responsibilities in taking forward the development and review of the curriculum and qualifications for post-compulsory education and training be clarified; and that ACCAC should work with the Welsh Assembly Government and peer bodies to explore the scope for further development of vocational qualifications and materials through the Welsh medium. The report also recommends that ACCAC should look to raise its profile and promote greater public awareness of its role and the work it undertakes in fulfilling its remit; notably through the development of its new website.

Compliance

7. The Review has been undertaken in accordance with the published Quinquennial Review guidelines. In addition to its participation in the Review, ACCAC has been consulted on all matters of fact.

Action for Committee

8. The Committee is asked to comment on the final Report before submission to Ministers.

Contact point

Financial Planning Division.