

## The Highland Council

Minutes of the **Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers** held in Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 7 November 2014 at 2.05 pm.

### Present:

#### Representing the Management Side:

Mr A Christie  
Mr M Green  
Mr G Ross  
Ms J Slater

#### Representing the Joint Union Side:

Mr A Bell (EIS)  
Ms C McCombie (EIS)  
Ms A MacDonald (EIS)  
Mr D Allan (SSTA)

### Also Present:

Mr B Alexander, Joint Secretary, Management Side  
Mr R Colman, Joint Secretary, Joint Union Side  
Ms J Douglas, Management Side  
Ms M Smith, Management Side  
Dr D Alston, Management Side

### Officials in Attendance:

Ms A MacPherson, Acting Workforce Planning and Staffing Manager, Care and Learning Service  
Ms B Johnstone, HR Business Partner, Corporate Development Service  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service

### Ms J Slater in the Chair

### Business

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. Minutes of Meeting held on 8 November 2013

The Committee **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 13 June 2014.

#### 4. Remote School Allowances

The Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) required Councils to regularly review the schools entitled to remote school allowances, based on national criteria relating to teacher numbers, proximity to other schools and public transport routes.

The schools entitled to remote allowances for the current school session had been reviewed and those entitled had been circulated. In summary, Torridon and Achfary Primaries had been removed from the list as these schools were currently mothballed, and Canna Primary had been added.

The Committee **APPROVED** the list of schools entitled to remote school allowances for session 2014/15.

## 5. Budget Update

The Director of Care and Learning explained that the Highland Council faced an extremely challenging financial position in the next 4 years with a £64m gap requiring to be addressed. This equated to budget savings of 4% for 2015/16 with further savings of 1% for each of the following three financial years. For the Care and Learning Service, this meant £21m needed to be found and, to date £17m had been identified. The Council had already met Trade Unions and the Service also proposed to discuss proposals to bridge the gap, including shortening the Primary School day and the allocation of staff in secondary schools, at a meeting with Trade Unions on 18 November.

The Joint Secretary, Joint Union Side commented that, while they could not support the proposed savings that would impact on the quality of education provided for learners in Highland, they were happy to continue with the consultation process and would attend the proposed meeting on 18 November.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

## 6. Work Plan

### i. Professional Update for Teachers

At the Adult and Children's Service Committee on 22 May 2013, Members had agreed to the involvement of the Council in Phase 2 of the General Teaching Council for Scotland's (GTCS) Pilot for the Professional Update (PU) for Teachers. The pilot had been carried out in two Associated School Groups – Wick and Culloden - during the course of school session 2013/14 in preparation for PU being rolled out across all schools beginning in August 2014.

In developing PU for Teachers, a new policy and guidance on Professional Review and Development had been drawn up for all teachers in Highland, meeting the requirements of PU, which formed part of the evidence presented for Highland Council's PU Validation carried out by the GTCS. In addition, existing systems within the Service had been developed to support, record and provide the evidence required by the GTCS of each teacher's involvement in PU.

To support the implementation of PU, a training course covering the new policy, process and system had been developed which was being delivered on a geographical basis. This training course had been well received by all who had attended it. In addition, the Service had continued to ensure that information on PU was regularly provided through a variety of channels such as emails, presentations at Head Teacher meetings and regular discussion with key staff. The LNCT had been involved in the development of the new policy and

procedures and it continued to support and monitor the implementation of PU during the course of the current session.

The Joint Secretary, Joint Union Side confirmed that the Teachers' Side had already been involved in the development of PU and was happy to continue that involvement. They did, however, raise the issue of PU and supply teachers, an issue which they believed required clarification in light of the recent letter issued by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

## ii. **Salary Conservation**

National Conditions of Service for promoted teachers would change in 2016, resulting in the removal of lifetime conservation. Currently, 30 teachers were affected by this change. Through retirements and appointments to other posts, this number had reduced over the years and it was anticipated that by 2016, as a result of continued movement of staff, the number might reduce to around 22.

The SNCT had exhorted Councils to use their best endeavours to manage the process of change. Over the course of the next two months, individual meetings would be arranged with each teacher currently affected by this change to discuss their individual situations and explore possible ways of minimising the impact on them. These meetings would take place prior to Christmas 2014 and a further update would be provided to the LNCT.

The Joint Union Side was pleased to see progress on a matter which was causing concern among teachers affected by the issue.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

## iii. **Tackling Bureaucracy and Monitoring Workload – Working Time Agreement**

Following concerns nationally over unnecessary bureaucracy and workload arising from the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), a short life working group had been established to identify the main drivers around excessive bureaucracy relating to the implementation of CfE and make proposals for addressing the issues involved. This included highlighting practical examples of good practice in securing the benefits of CfE whilst minimising bureaucracy. The Working Group had issued its report in November 2013 and it had been distributed to local authorities and primary and secondary schools in January 2014.

In April 2014, a questionnaire had been issued to all schools asking for suggestions as to what could be done practically to alleviate targeted areas around planning, monitoring and reporting systems and reporting formats. Once all the returns were submitted by schools, it was intended that the responses would be considered in detail to identify potential solutions to these matters.

The SNCT Code of Practice on Working Time Arrangements (WTA) for Teachers stated that each educational establishment would prepare an annual programme of activities which required the involvement of teachers. In each school, teachers were to agree the range of collective activities contributing to the wider

life of the school on a collegiate basis. The use of the remaining time, i.e. time beyond the combined class contact and preparation/correction allowance, was subject to agreement at school level and needed to be planned to include a range of activities such as additional time for preparation and correction, preparation of reports and records, forward planning, formal assessment and curriculum development, as well as parents evenings and staff meetings, continuing professional development and additional supervised pupil activity. Part of the role of the LNCT was to monitor WTA for schools and the Joint Union and Management Sides intended to jointly monitor WTAs for 2014/15 to identify and share good practice across schools and discuss any issues of concern.

The Teachers' Side welcomed the opportunity to jointly monitor the WTAs for 2014/15 but expressed concerned at the large number of schools that had failed to return these by the agreed date. Consultation and collegiate working was crucial to effective working in schools and to reaching agreement on WTA, which in themselves were vital in helping to tackle excessive workload and bureaucracy in schools. The Teachers' Side however welcomed the further action the Management Side were taking to gather in the late submissions.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

#### **iv. Reporting**

Recent discussions with Joint Union Side LNCT Members had resulted in agreement that a small working group be formed consisting of officers, Head Teachers and a representative from the LNCT to consider the systems and mechanisms for reporting to parents so that the best use could be made of teacher time in undertaking this task.

The Teachers' Side welcomed the development, particularly given the significant problems SEEMiS had encountered. This has resulted in many schools developing interim reports, which had created a new workload issue for teachers. The Teachers' Side expressed their hope that the group would produce recommendations that would tackle such issues.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

The meeting concluded at 2.15 pm