

The Highland Council

Minutes of the **Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers** held in Committee Room 4, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 13 November 2019 at 1.05 pm.

Present:

Representing the Management Side:

Mr J Finlayson
Mr A Jarvie
Ms L Munro

Representing the Teachers' Side:

Ms A MacDonald (EIS)
Ms C McCombie (EIS)
Mrs C Whiteford (EIS)

In attendance:

Mr A Bell, Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side
Ms N Grant, Joint Secretary, Management Side/Interim Head of Education, Care and Learning Service
Ms A MacPherson, Workforce Planning and Staffing Manager, Care and Learning Service
Ms R Bell, Policy Officer, Care and Learning Service
Ms J Sikkema, HR Business Partner, Chief Executive's Office
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Ms A MacDonald in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Mackinnon, Mr M Reiss, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr D Mackay, Mr G Mackenzie, Mr R MacWilliam, Mr S Tillman and Mr A Sutcliffe.

2. Declarations of Interest

Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in any item that might raise discussion on Additional Support Needs (ASN) on the basis that he worked for Inclusion Scotland who had stated their opposition to ASN reductions nationally but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 19 June 2019

The Committee **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 19 June 2019.

4. Work Plan Review 2019-20

There had been circulated Report No LNCT/03/19 dated 5 November 2019 by the Interim Head of Education.

During discussion, the Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, made the following comments:-

- the Teachers' Side was happy to note the Work Plan Review. However, there were ongoing concerns about some areas within the review, one such area being cuts to ASN provision. Evidence from staff was that pupils' emotional welfare was being impacted negatively with disengagement, isolation, reluctance to participate etc becoming more prevalent, and it was feared that the attainment of all pupils was being affected by the situation;
- also of concern was teacher workload which, along with ASN, was a subject within the Deputy First Minister's communication, and was acknowledged to be a national issue. There had been great confusion, for various reasons, about the two additional in-service days. Practice across Highland varied and it was requested that it be communicated to staff that the day not under local authority control in November, and the day in February, be put aside wholly for the purpose of overtaking the contents of the Deputy First Minister's communication, on which no time had been spent to this point;
- the statement in section 4.2 of the report that the authority continued to seek solutions to support a reduction in bureaucracy and workload was welcomed;
- in relation to Early Learning and Childcare, further information would be welcome on any proposals to close local authority early years settings;
- in relation to Principal Teacher Entitlement Reviews, it was requested that details be provided of the schools where reviews had been completed during the previous session, as well as those where work was ongoing; and
- in relation to Review of LNCT Agreements, following a review of the SNCT guidelines on job-sizing, there was an expectation upon LNCTs to agree a policy covering practice within their authority. Whilst LNCT 3 covered promoted post structures in the secondary setting and referred to procedures, it was necessary to create a new LNCT Agreement – Policy on Job-sizing Practice and Procedure – as a matter of urgency.

The Joint Secretary, Management Side, noted the comments regarding ASN provision. In relation to the Improvement Agenda, the aim was to support professional learning from the centre. It was acknowledged that there had been logistical and resource challenges, and they would be worked on going forward. The provision of a suite of qualifications and training for staff across Highland was highlighted. However, the Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, commented that the provision of training as mitigation was not necessarily going to solve issues.

The Workforce Planning and Staffing Manager confirmed that the information requested regarding Principal Teacher Entitlement Reviews would be provided, and that the matter of a new LNCT Agreement on Job-Sizing Practice and Procedure would be looked into.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the position in respect of:-

- National Improvement Framework

- Improvement Agenda
- Additional Support Needs Transformation Project
- Early Learning and Childcare
- Whole School Job-sizing Reviews/ PT Entitlement Reviews
- Review of LNCT Agreements

In addition to the report, the Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, raised the issue of the General Election on 12 December which, in terms of legislation, would see 68 schools in Highland being shut to pupils as they were to be used as polling stations. It would be treated as an in-service day so staff would be expected to attend school. However, they would be unable to cross the threshold of a polling station so alternative entry would have to be identified. In terms of how the day would be used, an assurance was sought that this would be discussed at school level and not wholly decided by Head Teachers.

The meeting concluded at 1.20 pm.