

The Highland Council

Minutes of the **Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers** held remotely on Tuesday 9 November 2022 at 3.05 pm.

Present:

Representing the Management Side:

Mrs M Cockburn
Ms H Crawford
Mr J Finlayson
Mr D Millar

Representing the Teachers' Side

Mr L MacKenzie (EIS)
Ms K Mathie (EIS)
Dr J Vance (SLS)
Ms G Warburton (EIS)

Also present as observers:

Mr T Coles (EIS)
Mr J Grafton (Management Side)
Ms S Mills (SSTA)

In attendance:

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

Mr J Finlayson in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms S Atkin, Mr A Jarvie, Mr D Loudon and Mr C Munro.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 28 June 2022

The Committee **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 28 June 2022.

4. Work Plan 2022-23 Update

There had been circulated Report No LNCT/03/22 dated 8 November 2022 by

the Executive Chief Officer, Education and Learning.

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

- in relation to the Education and Learning Service Plan 2022/23, whilst raising attainment clearly was a goal, it was questioned whether it should be the main driver during recovery from Covid. Health and wellbeing, not just of teachers but of everyone in the school community, was key. It was not yet business as usual, with schools never having fully recovered from Covid and now dealing with the current financial burdens. The need for sympathy and empathy, and to be cognisant of where schools were in terms of recovery, was emphasised;
- whilst it would have been great to take the review of the Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme forward, the deferral was understandable given the current bleak fiscal situation. However, this impacted upon schools and their management capacity, particularly primary schools;
- in relation to Improving Diversity in Education, inclusivity and diversity should be an integral part of children's education and school management teams should be ensuring that staff were acting in an inclusive and appropriate manner around anyone that could be considered a minority. Highland schools should be inclusive places for pupils, staff and visitors alike, and it was necessary to demonstrate this at every opportunity. In terms of the Council as an inclusive employer, it was important to convey the right message during recruitment processes, and it was understood this was being addressed at corporate level;
- Safeguarding in Education and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Improvement Plan were key. There were greater levels of poor mental health and wellbeing than there had been previously, and staff were doing a great job. In particular, the work taking place in Aviemore and Kingussie to integrate Ukrainian children into the school community was commended. Excellent work was also taking place in terms of reintegrating pupils into school. The Chair added that there would be a presentation at the Education Committee on 23 November about the Ukrainian refugees in Badenoch and Strathspey and the positive work taking place there; and
- as indicated in the report, Whole School Job-Sizing Reviews/Principal Teacher Entitlement Reviews was linked to the review of the DSM scheme and would be taken forward once the Scheme had been agreed.

Management Side officers responded to the points raised as follows:-

- in relation to attainment and the health and wellbeing agenda, it was concurred that it was not yet business as usual and it was helpful to hear, from the Teachers' Side's perspective, the views of Head Teachers and staff. However, it was important to take a balanced approach, hence the emphasis, both in the report and the Service Vision, on leadership and health and wellbeing which would raise attainment;
- with regard to the current financial burdens, a number of budget holder and stakeholder engagement sessions had taken place last week, which Head Teachers had been a part of, and the open and honest discussions had been well received;
- in relation to the DSM Scheme review, it was unfortunate that this had not been able to be brought to the November Education Committee but the Service was committed to taking it forward, probably to the Full Council.

Officers, Head Teachers and the teaching unions were commended for the discussions that had taken place, and it was important to keep having those conversations;

- with regard to Safeguarding and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan, it was important that it was not just about staff but about communities too, and attention was drawn to the report to the Education Committee on 23 November 2022 on Community Learning and Development and the partnership work taking place in terms of mental health and wellbeing. Reference was also made to the Interrupted Learners Programme for vulnerable young people, some of whom had mental health and wellbeing issues, and the work of the Principal Educational Psychologist's team in terms of Head Teacher supervision in respect of mental health and wellbeing; and
- whilst Whole School Job-Sizing Reviews/Principal Teacher Entitlement Reviews were paused for the reasons stated in report, re-sizing of some primary settings had been raised as part of an internal audit. This would be taken forward under the direction of the Head of Service, and the Teachers' Side would be kept informed of timescales.

In relation to LNCT 23 Appointments Procedures – Headteachers and Depute Headteachers, thanks were expressed to both sides for their efforts in reviewing the agreement to ensure that recruitment procedures were up-to-date and the best candidates were being appointed as Headteachers and Depute Headteachers.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position in respect of:
 - a. Education and Learning Service Plan 2022/23
 - b. Devolved School Management Review
 - c. Improving Diversity in Education
 - d. Safeguarding in Education and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Improvement Plan
 - e. Whole School Job-sizing Reviews/Principal Teacher Entitlement Reviews
 - f. Review of LNCT Agreements; and
- ii. **APPROVED**:
 - a. the deletion of LNCT 8 Exit Interview Policy (Appendix 1 of the report); and
 - b. LNCT 23 Appointments Procedures – Headteachers and Depute Headteachers (Appendix 2 of the report).

5. Appointment to Central Safety Committee

The Committee **NOTED** that Mr A Bell, Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, had been appointed to the Council's Central Safety Committee to represent the teaching unions.

The Chair thanked both sides for the engagement that had taken place and emphasised the importance of ongoing communication. He acknowledged the challenges everyone was facing during difficult financial times and expressed his

appreciation of the work taking place in schools and the dedication of staff.

The meeting concluded at 3.25 pm.