

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Dingwall on Friday, 25 April 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Representing the Management Side

Mr W Fernie
Mr B Gormley
Mrs P Munro
Mr A M Millar

Representing the Joint Union Side

Mr A Bell)
Mr R Colman)
Mr D Noble) EIS
Ms D Murray)

Mrs Attridge) NASMUWT

Mr G MacKenzie) HAS

Also Present

Mr A M Stewart, Joint Secretary, Joint Union Side
Mr H Fraser, Joint Secretary, Management Side

Officials in attendance:

Mr D MacDonald, Head of Education Services, Education, Culture and Sport
Miss M McCarrell, Quality Development Officer (Strategic Initiatives), Education, Culture and Sport
Mrs E Kirkham, Principal Staffing Resource Officer, Education, Culture and Sport
Mr J Allison, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Mr R Colman in the Chair

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs C A Wilson and Mrs D Mackay.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee held on 23 October 2007, copies of which had been circulated, were **APPROVED**.

3. "SAFE AND WELL" - NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION AUTHORITIES – USE OF CAMERA AND VIDEO PHONES

There had been circulated Report No LNCT1/08, an administrative circular covering the use of camera and video phones in schools and school residences. The circular highlighted the key issues regarding the taking and using of images of people and drew attention to the need for schools and school residences to have in place a policy on the

misuse of camera and video phones.

The Teachers' Side welcomed the circular and indicated that they had issued advice to their own members regarding this. However, they expressed the view that 'cyber bullying' was also a serious issue that required to be addressed due to the use of social networking sites for placing abusive material about teachers in the public domain and there was a need for a protocol for action in such cases.

The Director of Education, Culture and Sport indicated that while this issue was being examined at national level there was also a need to look at it urgently in the local context.

The Committee **NOTED** the Administrative Circular and **AGREED** to support the adoption of such policy by schools and school residences and that the informal LNCT examine what further steps could be taken in relation to 'cyber bullying'.

4. TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

The national position for teachers remained as agreed by the Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff in School Education in May 1997. The new national conditions of service, as agreed by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers in 2007, devolved the negotiation of travel and subsistence rates for teachers to Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers (LNCT). At its last meeting on 23 October 2007, the LNCT agreed that the Informal LNCT should discuss a review of travel and subsistence rates and report back to the next LNCT.

There had been circulated Report No LNCT2/08 setting out a proposed revision of travel and subsistence allowances outlining one harmonised scheme for all employees covered by the SJC for Local Government employees and JNC for Chief Officers of Local Authorities (Scotland). The Head of Personnel had confirmed this proposed scheme could also be made available to teachers providing improved mileage and subsistence rates. The Committee was informed that the Informal LNCT had discussed this matter and it had been agreed it should be discussed further at the formal LNCT.

While the teachers' representatives indicated a welcome for a review of the scheme of travel and subsistence after more than 10 years, concerns were raised regarding the removal of the essential car user status and the reduction of the casual users rate.

The Committee **AGREED** that the informal LNCT discuss the matter further and additional information be obtained from the Head of Personnel, if required

5. WORK IN PROGRESS – UPDATE

The Director of Education, Culture and Sport reported on progress made to date on the following:-

- Primary Clusters

Information was being gathered and it was hoped to agree a remit for the review before the end of the current session. It was hoped that the next informal LNCT could look at Primary Clusters and secondary management structures.

- School Working Time Arrangements

It was hoped to issue a revised document by the end of April and the Joint

Secretaries would send a letter to schools setting out the purpose of the review and providing a format for the returns.

- Management Structures

See above

- Absence Management Policy

While there was a need for clarification of some issues, the Corporate document would need to make reference to teaching staff.

- LNCT National Event

The event had been useful, with encouraging numbers present from the three partners, Teachers, Councils and COSLA. Workshops had covered various topics including the 2001 Agreement, collegiality, workload and the employment of support staff.

Amongst the points made was the significant improvement made in the supply of support staff. However, it was recognised that it is necessary to continue to monitor this. In addition, it was highlighted that working time remained an important issue, bearing in mind recent figures showing that the average working of teachers is 45 hours rising to 50 plus for head teachers.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

6. FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09 - BUDGET

Given the budgetary position within the Council for Financial Year 2008/09, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport provided a detailed update on the budget for the Education, Culture and Sport Service and indicated that while savings were required, without the additional funds allocated, savings of £7.m would have been required. Details would be issued to Head Teachers and discussion would take place with them and staff on the savings.

The Teachers side stated that, while recognising that some savings would be achieved by early retirement and vacancies, a longer view was necessary to ensure that staffing levels were maintained. The situation would vary from school to school and there would be a need to establish what the impact would be. The view was expressed that a possible result may be a reduction in the number of courses and subjects provided, and that absence cover may also be affected. Savings in other areas, while not directly affecting teachers, may have an impact on the resources available to deliver course work and the overall learning experience of pupils.

The Committee **NOTED** the position and **AGREED** that there be a standing item at meetings of the informal LNCT to keep the impact of the budget under review and to recommend action as need be.

The meeting ended at 2.55 p.m.