

# THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

## EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff held in Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Tuesday, 10 February 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

### PRESENT

#### Representing the Management Side

Mr W Fernie  
Mr A M Millar  
Mr B Gormley  
Mr M Rattray

#### Representing the Joint Union Side

Mr R Colman )  
Mr S Dowds )  
Ms D Murray ) EIS  
Ms A Whiteford )

Miss K Paterson ) Voice

Mr G MacKenzie ) Headteachers Association in  
Scotland

#### Also Present

Mr H Fraser, Joint Secretary, Management Side  
Mr A M Stewart, Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side  
Mr D Noble, EIS (observer)

#### Officials in attendance:

Mr R MacKenzie, Head of Support Services, Education, Culture and Sport Service  
Mr S Iliffe, Senior Manager (Additional Support Needs), Education, Culture and Sport Service  
Mrs E Kirkham, Principal Staffing Resource Officer, Education, Culture and Sport Service  
Miss M McCarrell, Quality Development Officer (Strategic Initiatives), Education, Culture and Sport Service  
Miss J MacLennan, Committee 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 Wilson and Mrs D MacKay.

#### 2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2008

The Minutes of the meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee held on 24 June 2008, copies of which had been circulated, were **APPROVED**.

Arising from the minutes were the following:-

- In relation to item 2, regarding Cyber Harassment, the Committee were informed that the Getting It Right for Every Child and Child Protection Groups had

commented on some aspects of the draft guidance. The intention was that the final guidance document would be considered by the next informal LNCT, before then being submitted to the formal LNCT, and would then be available via the Council's Intranet.

- In relation to item 3, Code of Practice on Teacher Competence, disappointment was expressed that, as the document had not been dealt with as an Agreement, it was not readily accessible to teachers. However, the Committee **AGREED** to convert the Code into an Administrative Circular, thus making it available on-line, and, for the avoidance of doubt, to clarify what could in future be considered as a Circular, Agreement and/or Code.
- In relation to item 5, Working Time Agreements, there was some concern that this had not yet been completed. The Committee were assured that analysis and discussion of the returns had begun and it was **AGREED** further advice for schools would be brought to the next meeting of the formal LNCT.

### 3. POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

There had been circulated Report No LNCT1/09 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport on building positive relationships for school improvement. A revised policy document was tabled at the meeting, taking into account additional comments made by the Teachers' Side.

The policy set out core values and the training available to achieve positive behaviour in schools. Highland Council recognised that there was a need to build its own capacity in supporting children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN). The Teachers' Side expressed concern that the capacity to support pupils with ASN was, in fact, being reduced.

The Committee **AGREED** the Positive Behaviour Policy.

### 4. SCHOOL HOLIDAY AND IN-SERVICE DATES

There had been circulated Report No LNCT2/09 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport on school holidays and in-service dates for session 2010/11 and additional in-service dates for sessions 2008/09-2010/11 to support the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence.

In discussion, the Teachers' Side suggested that, for the 2009/10 session and for the duration of the extra in-service day allowance, the proposed in-service days move from October to February which would allow schools to close for a week commencing on the second Monday of February, the week being made up of three in-service and two casual days. Amongst the possible benefits generated would be savings on heating and staff cover costs and it would provide a quality break in the long winter term which could be used as a study leave break for S5/6 pupils. In addition, it was suggested the proposed in-service date for the implementation for the Curriculum of Excellence be moved from 12 June 2009 to 26 June 2009 to allow the pre-summer transition of the S5/S6 timetable for pupils to embed without an interruption by a school holiday.

The key issue in determining school holidays had to be the impact on the education of young people. While accepting the possible merits on shifting the in-service date to 26 June 2009, the Committee **AGREED** that further discussion with Head Teachers would be required to clarify the situation and come to a final view on the June in-service date. The Committee also **AGREED** that the Joint Secretaries discuss the other suggested

amendments to the proposed school holiday and in-service dates for session 2010/11, taking into account the views expressed at the LNCT, pupil needs and the views of Head Teachers with a further report being submitted to the next LNCT.

## **5. VIOLENCE AT WORK**

Reference was made to recent press reports regarding an increase in reported attacks against teachers. As 289 attacks had been reported in the past year, there was an indication that there was a need to raise the profile of Violence at Work and to explore how staff could be protected. There was some discussion about possible under reporting of incidents and a review of policy would hopefully address this. Other issues such a review could consider would be the mechanisms for carrying out risk assessments and discussions with staff regarding the reintegration of offenders into classes. Many of the issues the policy would need to incorporate, such as the need for on-going support of staff and pupils, was already contained within the Cyber Bullying Policy and it was suggested this be used as a base.

The Committee **AGREED** that the informal LNCT and Education, Culture and Sport Committee consider the reported statistics in greater detail with a view to developing a Violence at Work Policy.

## **6. FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09 AND 2009/10 – BUDGET UPDATE**

The Director of Education, Culture and Sport provided an update on the 2008/09 and 2009/10 budget position within the Education, Culture and Sport Service.

In relation to the 2008/09 budget, particular mention was made of the pressures certain schools were under. It was explained a traffic-light indicator system was used to categorise current estimates for devolved school budgets. Schools running over 3% were categorised as red and at present this amounted to £467,000. Overall, however, the Service was managing to control the budget in light of increased energy and fuel costs.

With regard to the 2009/10 budget £3.37m savings required to be identified, totalling £20m savings over the last four years. Some of the measures proposed to achieve the 2009/10 savings target were outlined, including the reduction of those posts in excess of the formula used to determine teacher levels based on enrolment figures.

The Teachers' Side expressed concern was expressed at the cumulative effect that the cuts had had on the delivery of education in a time when the Curriculum for Excellence was being introduced. Over time, Additional Support Needs had been squeezed despite the move to develop a formula to reflect need and there was a danger that the Authority would fail to support the rising demand. Assurances were given that in drawing up the budget a priority had been to protect frontline services and the DSM savings identified would be made over a period of time. The offer of a budget briefing for staff from the Director was welcomed.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

## **7. WORK IN PROGRESS – UPDATE**

The Director of Education, Culture and Sport reported on progress made to date on the review of Secondary Management Structures and Primary Clusters. The Groups formed

to take forward the reviews had now met and had agreed mechanisms for information gathering and consultation. Questionnaires on Secondary Management Structures were due out next week while the Primary Clusters questionnaire would be issued the following week, both to be returned by Easter, with the outcome being reported to a future meeting of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee.

The meeting ended at 3.00 p.m.