

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Note of the Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff held in Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday, 23 April 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Representing the Management Side

Mr W Fernie
Mr B Gormley

Representing the Joint Union Side

Mr A Bell)
Ms C McCombie)
Ms D Murray) EIS
Ms A Whiteford)

Ms S Stevenson) Association of Headteachers
and Deputies in Scotland

Mr D Allan) Scottish Secondary Teachers'
Association

Also Present

Mr H Fraser, Joint Secretary, Management Side
Mr A M Stewart, Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side
Mr G MacKenzie, School Leaders Scotland (observer)

Officials in attendance:

Mr R MacKenzie, Head of Support Services, 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 W Fernie in the Chair

1. PRELIMINARIES

Those in attendance were informed that the meeting was inquorate. Consequently, although the meeting would continue, a note of proceedings would be submitted to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 21 May 2009 where the meeting's decisions would be approved.

Disappointment was expressed that this situation had re-arisen and a request was made that measures be taken to ensure that this would be avoided in future.

The meeting **NOTED** the position.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A M Millar, Mrs C A Wilson, Mr M Rattray and Mrs D MacKay.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2009

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee held on 10 February 2009, copies of which had been circulated, were **NOTED**.

Arising from the minutes were the following:-

- In relation to item 2, regarding the Code of Practice on Teacher Competence, it was pointed out that this had not yet been issued as an Administrative Circular. However, it was confirmed that there were a number of Administrative Circulars about to be issued and the Code of Practice on Teacher Competence would be included amongst these.
- In relation to item 4, School Holiday and In-Service Dates, the Joint Secretaries had met and discussed the matter and the in-service date for June would remain as 12 June 2009 with the facility for associated school groups to arrange an alternative date in June if local circumstances demanded. However, as there were a number of issues surrounding the remaining proposed amendments on school holiday dates, the views of Headteachers and schools were to be sought before a recommendation was made to the next meeting of the LNCT.

4. WORKING TIME AGREEMENTS

The Director of Education, Culture and Sport informed the meeting that a letter had been drafted, together with exemplar material, which would be issued to schools to ensure a consistent approach was being adopted in relation to Working Time Agreements (WTA). Included in the letter would be an evaluation template to enable views on the WTA to be fed back and for progress to be monitored.

It was recognised that the introduction of WTAs was an on-going process and a combined approach, particularly to Primary Headteachers, by the Joint Secretaries was proposed to provide advice to ensure good practice was being adopted.

The Meeting **NOTED** the position.

5. 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 Financial Year 2008/09 a number of schools had, in regard to their devolved school budget, ended the year with a deficit greater than 3%. Although these deficits would be brought back down to 3%, they would be carried forward into 2009/10. Other significant causes of overspends in 2008/09 had been energy costs and staffing levels in some schools had exceeded funding levels. To address this, additional funding had been allocated in the 2009/10 budget for energy costs and work was currently underway to bring staff numbers in line with agreed funding levels. It was hoped additional savings would also be made through early retrials and taking into account the number of probationer teachers posts being fully funded.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that it was still possible for teachers to request consideration for early retirement. Given school rolls might have moved significantly in certain schools, thus potentially necessitating a reduction in teacher numbers, it was suggested that it would be beneficial for a letter to be issued to schools to remind staff of this opportunity.

The Meeting **NOTED** the position.

6. WORK IN PROGRESS – UPDATE

i. Cluster Management Review

The Cluster Management Review Group had now met and the process required to take forward the review had been agreed. A questionnaire had been produced and the deadline for responses had been set for 1 May 2009. The feedback would then be analysed and implications considered with the intention of reporting back to a future LNCT with draft proposals.

ii. Secondary School Management Review

The first steps in the information gathering process had now been completed. Similar to the Cluster Management Review, a questionnaire had been produced and a return rate of approximately 30% had been achieved. Initial analysis of responses had indicated that there was little support for the faculty style management proposal. It was also intended that two members of the Review Group would visit six secondary schools to carry out face-to-face interviews. The Group had set aside two days to look at the information with a view to progressing the review as expediently as possible and producing proposals which could be consulted upon. It would then be considered at the next meeting of the LNCT with a view to it then being submitted to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 17 September 2009.

The meeting **NOTED** the positions.

7. SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE – POLICY AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

There had been circulated Report No LNCT3/09 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport introducing the Supporting Employees Experiencing Domestic Abuse policy and management guidelines and which set out an action plan for implementation, as approved by the Council's Resources Committee on 18 February 2009.

The Meeting **NOTED** the position.

The meeting ended at 2.20 p.m.