

The Highland Council

Minutes of the **Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers** held in Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 23 June 2017 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Representing the Management Side:

Mr A Christie
Mr J Finlayson
Mr G MacKenzie
Mr R MacWilliam

Representing the Teachers' Side

Ms A MacDonald (EIS)
Ms C McCombie (EIS)
Mr A Sutcliffe (SSTA)

Also Present:

Mr A Bell, Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side

Officials in Attendance:

Mr J Steven, Head of Education, Care and Learning Service
Ms R Bell, Policy Officer, Care and Learning Service
Ms A MacPherson, Workforce Planning and Staffing Manager, Care and Learning Service
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Mr J Finlayson in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Baxter, Ms K Currie and Mr A Mackinnon.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 4 November 2016

The Committee **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 4 November 2016.

4. Budget Update

The Head of Education provided an update on Devolved School Management budgets, highlighting that, of the 200-plus schools in Highland, 186 were marked Green – ie they would carry forward a small surplus. The remainder were marked Amber. It was the first time in a significant number of years that no schools were over their deficit limitations and he commended Head

Teachers and school staff for their efforts in that regard.

In terms of the wider budget, the Chair of the People Committee explained that the Council continued to face severe challenges across all Services, as it had for a number of years. The projection for the next five years was a funding gap of between £125m and £185m, depending on factors such as pay inflation, price inflation and the grant settlement. A report on the financial outlook 2018-2023 would be presented to the Council on 29 June 2017.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

5. Work Plan – Review 2016/17

i. National Improvement Framework

The following objectives had been overtaken during 2016/17:-

- Revised school planning procedures in place
- Successful bids submitted by the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Schools
- Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) school guidance in place
- The authority had accessed additional funding for the development of STEM subjects
- Emerging literacy implementation rolled out in Highland and the Northern Alliance
- Literacy and numeracy action plans had been developed and implementation taken forward
- Assessment data in P1, P4, P7 and S2 collected and submitted to the Scottish government
- Data analysis training delivered to staff
- Key aspects of the National Digital Learning strategy had begun to be delivered through the Management of Schools project

During discussion, the Teachers' Side commented that there were several additional sources of funding and trusted that the associated processes had not caused further work for both promoted and un-promoted staff. Reference was made to instances of PEF applications being returned because they did not have a School Improvement Plan (SIP) attached, despite the fact that the original PEF deadline was ahead of the SIP deadline, and concern was expressed that this increased workload and added an unnecessary level of bureaucracy at a time when efforts were being made to reduce such things. Linked to this, it was hoped that any plans/initiatives around the six drivers took full account of workload implications, including the Highland Workload Control Agreement, and would either replace or form a framework for existing practice, rather than adding to it, as the curriculum was already cluttered.

In relation to assessment data, it was hoped that this was formed by teachers' professional judgement supported by any standardised assessments rather than collected purely from standardised assessments that were sat by whole cohorts of pupils. With the new standardised assessments coming in, it was hoped that the Council would commit to following Scottish Government guidance that:

1. there should be no whole cohort assessment
2. the results should support teachers judgement
3. the score should not be recorded publicly
4. they should replace all others
5. they should not be used outside the stipulated year groups

It was also hoped that this commitment would be clearly communicated to schools and an assurance was sought that the data would not be misused to form such things as league tables or benchmarking of schools.

In terms of the support available, it was hoped that it was both suitable and adequate and information was sought on how the Council planned to deliver it.

In response, the Director of Education acknowledged the concerns raised and confirmed that standardised assessment, which would take place in the forthcoming session, would support teachers' professional judgement. An assurance was provided that the Council would not be seeking to create league tables. The data would, however, be provided to the Scottish Government, as it had been the previous year. A further moderation exercise would be carried out by the Quality Improvement Team to address any areas of concern. In terms of the associated IT, it was understood that it was very flexible but the intention was to monitor the position closely and minimise any impact on schools.

In relation to additional funding, whilst there had been challenges in relation to SAC funding, it was argued that PEF applications had not caused undue additional work, with only one costings sheet being required in addition to the SIP. Discussion had taken place where schools had not met the required standards in terms of quality of outcomes etc but that was standard improvement planning procedure and provided an element of security for school staff. Some schools had received sizeable amounts of funding which, whilst positive, could put staff under a different kind of pressure and it was necessary to monitor the situation closely and work with schools in that regard. There was no desire to create additional work and it was important that both the Management and Teachers' Sides were vigilant in that regard. However, schools would have to report on the new core quality indicators for submission to the Scottish Government as part of the improvement agenda.

In response to questions, it was explained that standardised assessments had not been piloted but rather showcase events had taken place throughout Scotland. It was anticipated that, through work with the Teachers' Side, the position would be reviewed at an early stage. InCAS would be replaced, as would the Health and Wellbeing Survey.

In addition, it was highlighted that there had been some debate within the Northern Alliance regarding a common assessment window. Schools views had been sought but no window had been agreed at this stage.

The Teachers' Side did not anticipate that it would support an assessment window, teachers' professional judgement being key in

terms of when pupils were ready for assessment.

Having emphasised the importance of obtaining the most accurate assessment data, based on professional judgement, the Committee **NOTED** the position.

ii. **Management of Schools**

The Management of Schools project would deliver on the following agreed six workstreams with a proposed implementation programme of three to four years:-

Workstream 1 – Curriculum Delivery

By August 2017 all secondary schools would move to a 33 period condensed week. All five Inverness secondary schools had agreed a common timetable to enable increased opportunity for partnership working across schools, colleges and employers. There had also been an increase in the number of courses available to virtual or on-line delivery.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side commented that, whilst moving to a common timetable to facilitate partnership, maintenance of available courses etc could be seen as a good idea, the model adopted within Inverness schools was a 32+1 period week where the +1 was accounted for by having 5x10 minute registration periods. Other schools had maintained registration and 33 periods by having a 5 minute registration and 5 periods that were 45 minutes long. Education Scotland had apparently commented unfavourably when they had encountered a school that had no formal registration in the morning.

There were issues surrounding the movement of primary schools to the 33 period week model where there were part-time workers and their Class Contact Reduction (CCR) time was awkwardly split. This was more of a problem in small rural schools. There had been rumours of staff being asked to work their CCR time for pay but there was no facility for overtime within SNCT guidelines.

The roll out of 1:1 Chromebooks continued to cause serious concern and many questions remain unanswered. Teaching and Learning, in particular Additional Support Needs, was an issue with a significant number of programs that supported students being no longer available, thereby negatively affecting established programmes of work. Other areas of concern included responsibility, accountability, increasing costs, training, viability of network capability, and workload. The Teachers' Side remained willing to meet and discuss these issues and expressed disappointment that meetings were frequently cancelled and those that did go ahead were dominated by technical issues. Concern was expressed that issues raised by the Teachers' Side at ICT strategy meetings did not appear to have been taken on board and it was feared that the situation would degenerate with technology sitting in classrooms, unused.

In relation to the move to a 33 period week, the Management Side

explained that it was looking at it from a curricular benefit perspective and putting in building blocks that would allow the development of a curriculum, in the future, that was not the same in every Highland school but had some commonality in block structure. The Head of Education undertook to consider the issues raised regarding registration periods.

With regard to CCR time, it was confirmed that there was no budget for payment of overtime. A number of queries had been received from primary schools about part-time staff and further information and support would be provided.

The Teachers' Side added that some part-time staff had had their day off changed to a Friday and felt aggrieved at what they saw as a change in their working week as they did not technically have as much time off as previously.

The Management Side, whilst sympathetic to personal circumstances, emphasised the difficulties in putting timetables together and that staff were paid in accordance with their contracted hours.

In response to a question, the Head of Education undertook to ascertain the percentage of primary schools that had taken up the 33 period week and report back to the Committee. It had been left up to individual schools to decide if they wanted to implement it and it had been agreed to reflect on the position at the end of the year.

The Teachers' Side added that there had been issues in terms of primary schools being unaware, until it was too late, that the authority was willing to make alternative arrangements for pupils who used the same transport as secondary school pupils.

Further detailed discussion took place on the roll out of Chromebooks, during which the Management Side commented that it was a tremendous innovation and should be viewed positively. Connectivity was challenging in Highland and there would always be teething problems with such a large installation but the important thing was for parents, teachers and the Council to work together and learn from any issues that arose.

Responding to comments and questions, the Head of Education confirmed that a programme was in place, Millburn ASG being first, followed by Portree then Dingwall. The programme had been agreed with the corporate ICT team who had given an assurance that the necessary bandwidth would be put in place. Whilst there had been some issues in Dingwall, it was understood that these had been addressed by increasing one of the primary bandwidths. There were no bandwidth issues in Millburn ASG and it was ready to go. The aim was to ensure that staff had the confidence to use what was an exciting additional resource to develop innovative learning and teaching strategies. However, it was emphasised that there would be no pressure on staff and there was no expectation that schools would have to pay for training or software.

The Teachers' Side stressed that it was not against the introduction of

Chromebooks and acknowledged the need to work together. Nevertheless, concerns had been raised that were not related to bandwidth and it was important that they were addressed.

Following discussion, the Chair suggested that the Teachers' Side submit a list of questions/issues that were causing concern to the Head of Education in order that he could respond fully.

Workstream 2 – School Management Structures and School Groupings

At the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee on 26 January and 1 March 2017, approval had been granted for the implementation of new management structures across seven Associated School Groups (ASGs) from August 2017. There would therefore be:-

- 3-18 ASGs formally established in Kinlochbervie, Dornoch, Kilchuimen and Farr
- a 3-18 campus formally established in Plockton with new primary groupings also created within the same ASG
- new primary groupings established in Lochaber and Millburn ASGs

It had also been agreed that consultation should continue with the communities in the Mallaig High School ASG to take particular account of the needs of the very small school rolls on the Small Isles.

As part of phase 1 the Management Side had agreed that Head Teachers (HT) or Depute Head Teachers (DHT) appointed to a lower grade promoted post in the new management structures would retain their cash conservation rights. This was an enhancement to national conditions and would hopefully encourage the retention of experienced staff within the new management structures. This position would be reviewed at the end of phase 1.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side commented that they were happy to maintain participation in this workstream subject to an assurance that the lessons learnt from phase 1 would inform better practice for phase 2. It was hoped that this clarity would be maintained at all levels of consultation to come. Having had contact with ASGs, there was an apparent lack of knowledge amongst school staff.

Reservations were expressed regarding any proposals to cluster primary schools in groups or more than two and, whilst it was understood that tri-cluster arrangements currently existed in Highland, the workload associated with those arrangements appeared to be causing issues.

In relation to conservation of salary rights for HTs and DHTs appointed to lower grade promoted posts in the new management structures, a request was made that a letter be issued to the staff affected and it was hoped that this facility would be made available to all subsequent phases of the project.

Further discussion took place on the issue of salary conservation, during which the Management Side explained that the position would have to be

reviewed in terms of affordability. The proposal was in addition to national conditions and, if there were concerns about consistency in future phases, it might be necessary to reflect on what had been offered.

Workstream 3 - Support to Schools

This workstream had most recently focussed on administration, clerical and general school support arrangements, particularly in relation to the new structures in the Phase 1 schools. This had provided an opportunity to examine the remits for clerical and administration staff, and potential advances with ICT and school systems, identifying the potential for improved business support through a co-ordinated and managed ASG approach. There had also been consideration of how a generalist non-teaching member of staff in small rural schools could deal with a range of day to day tasks on site, including clerical duties, pupil transport issues, visitors and callers, and classroom assistance. This would allow class teachers to concentrate on learning and teaching, without interruption.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side commented that whilst this workstream directly affected non-teaching staff, it was hoped that there would be a positive impact for non-teaching staff. However, this should not be arrived at as a result of adverse effects on clerical/administrative staff and it was trusted that non-teaching unions were fully behind the proposals. Updates on the progress of the pilot schemes at Dornoch and Kilchuimen ASGs were eagerly anticipated.

In response, it was confirmed that the Management Side continued to work with non-teaching unions to ensure the delivery of a support structure that was better for the school as a whole.

Workstream 4 – Early Learning and Childcare

There were now 48 schools across Highland providing additional chargeable flexible early learning and childcare.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side requested that a list of the 48 schools be made available. In addition, an assurance was sought that the provision of additional early learning and childcare had no adverse effects on the teaching staff at the schools involved, particularly in terms of workload. It remained unacceptable that some combined nursery/primary early years classes were in excess of normal class size maxima for composite classes, despite assurances given previously regarding this issue. Further discussion regarding parameters would be welcomed.

In response, the Management Side confirmed that it was happy to enter into further discussions. It was explained that the classes referred to were not in excess of maxima but were early level classes comprising a mixture of nursery 3 and 4 year olds in an informal setting. Detailed information had been provided to the Teachers' Side and could be made available to Members outwith the meeting.

Workstream 5 – Workforce Planning and Recruitment

The Workforce Planning Team had developed remits and carried out job-sizing for posts within the new management structures in agreement with the Teachers' Side. Recruitment to these new posts continued as per LNCT 33 Rationalisation of School Estate – Procedures for the Appointment of Teaching and Promoted Staff and LNCT 34 Procedures for the Transfer of Surplus Promoted Teaching Staff.

Appointments had been made to the following posts to date:-

HT Dornoch 3-18

HT and DHT Kinlochbervie 3-18

HT Farr 3-18

In addition to the information provided, the Teachers' Side highlighted that two DHTs (one internal and one external) had been appointed to Dornoch 3-18. The Head Teacher of Millburn Academy had been present at the interviews as a staff side representative. Two internal candidates had also been appointed to Farr 3-18.

Disappointment was expressed that there had been no LNCT representation at the interviews for DHT posts at Kinlochbevie and Farr, and it was emphasised that this situation must be addressed for future appointments. It was hoped that those appointed would fulfil their roles well with the support promised by workstream 6.

Reference was made to improvements to the generic process for primary teacher recruitment over the past year and news of any issues was awaited. Supply staff numbers remained an issue and a more robust pool of permanent supply staff would be welcomed. Retired teachers made up the supply pool in certain areas and they could only fulfil a certain number of hours per year.

In response, the Management Side explained that, whilst it was necessary to increase the supply pool, getting teachers into classrooms had to be the priority and, despite 96 generic appointments, primary school teachers were still required. The supply issue had been exacerbated by the creation of additional posts through PEF funding and, whilst a "grow your own" approach had been implemented, the numbers were small. It was suggested that it was necessary to examine demand for and access to supply teachers throughout Highland and explore more effective solutions.

Workstream 6 – Leadership

The focus of this workstream was to ensure the innovative new 3-18 management arrangements were well supported. There would be a three year strategic plan for delivering the training requirements for existing and future Head Teachers.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side commented that, whilst the theory behind this workstream was sound, without proper input from the lead officer it was difficult to know how fit for purpose it was as yet. The Teachers' Side looked forward to having an active part in the process and receiving an outline plan for the strategy before the next meeting of

the LNCT Executive Group.

In response, the Head of Education confirmed that would be the case. The proposed strategic plan was a key plank of the new management structures and the lead officer had held off until such time as the appointments had been made. Internal and external courses would be provided and, in terms of its partnership agreement with the Council, Education Scotland would deliver some training.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position;
AGREED that the Head of Education ascertain the percentage of primary schools that had taken up the 33 period week and report back to the Committee;
- ii. **AGREED**, in relation to the roll out of 1:1 Chromebooks, that the Teachers' Side submit a list of questions/issues that were causing concern to the Head of Education in order that a comprehensive response could be provided; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a list of the 48 schools providing additional chargeable flexible early learning and childcare be made available to the Teachers' Side.

iii. **Tackling Bureaucracy and Managing Workload**

Work had continued to focus on providing a clearer articulation of expectations around tackling excessive workload. This included continuing to review the balance between providing a 'steer' yet allowing for autonomy and flexibility in approaches adopted by schools.

Work continued to ensure the administrative requirements on schools were minimised and the benefits of IT systems were maximised.

The authority had continued to take forward plans which would ensure greater levels of consistency on workload requirements on schools - for example, on curriculum planning.

This issue was monitored formally through the Head of Education management meeting and the LNCT.

Further to the commentary provided under previous items, the Teachers' Side highlighted that 94% of EIS members who had responded to a national survey had reported that their workload had increased over the last year. It was also noted that Education Scotland had a workpoint on a particular school's plan to reduce workload when they carried out an inspection.

In relation to National 5 assessment, an assurance was sought that a "belt and braces" approach would only be offered to a very small minority of students this year and it was suggested that schools should be reminded that the majority of students should be entered for either the course or the units, not both.

It was recognised that, due to timetable/staffing constraints, it was

sometimes impossible to avoid bi-level senior classes in secondary schools. However, if bi-level classes were to be provided, it was requested that consideration be given, through school level negotiation, to the provision of additional non-contact time for the staff affected, as well as smaller class sizes. Furthermore, if staff felt that what they were being asked to do was inappropriate, it was suggested that they might challenge it through the Council's grievance procedures.

Another area of concern was the excessive amount of time being spent on Child's Plans, with reports of up to 10 hours being spent on the mechanisms for one meeting alone, from arranging through to carrying out, writing up and feeding back. Where children had complex issues, numerous and regular meetings were required and often staff had several such pupils in their caseload. If current practices were to continue, staff must have more time made available to them or be given more support through such means as additional staff or other agencies taking more responsibility.

Concern was also expressed that the new neurodevelopmental questionnaire had been implemented by NHS Highland with no consultation. In addition, the Teachers' Side questioned the value of the 56 page SIP, which again appeared to have been implemented with no consultation, and how much responsibility was being placed on un-promoted staff. A member of staff had estimated that the time spent on last year's development tasks was 240 hours and it was requested that schools take cognisance of the time required for any improvement plan activity.

Finally, information was sought on the current position with regard to the submission of Working Time Agreements (WTAs) to the Council.

In response, the Management Side concurred with the points raised in relation to National 5 assessment and confirmed that guidance would be issued to schools following the summer holidays.

With regard to bi-level teaching, bi-level classes had existed in a great number of schools for many years and it was important to consider the Highland context. It was emphasised that there was a range of ability in any class.

The Teachers' Side added that bi-level teaching was possible where there was a common topic with a varying level of understanding. However, with some subjects there was no commonality and it was necessary to prepare two lessons for every class. In addition, where Chromebooks were being used, it was necessary to prepare two further lessons as a backup in case the network was down.

The Management Side accepted the need for vigilance, through the LNCT Executive Group, and further discussion if an additional administrative burden was being placed on staff.

Turning to the Child's Plan, the Management Side commented that it should not be the responsibility of one individual and concurred with the point raised regarding other agencies being more involved. The work

involved was significant and the need for vigilance was recognised. It had been accepted that the Child's Plan could be reviewed and a briefer format developed. In addition, the Head of Additional Support Needs had agreed that additional clerical time could be requested to support the Child's Plan if necessary.

In relation to the SIP, the Management Side commented that the school improvement agenda had been driven nationally and the 56 page document referred to included the toolkit. The SIP itself should be a brief document, focussed on outcomes. The Quality Improvement Team had delivered training on the SIP and data analysis but further training could be undertaken if required.

Considerable discussion took place on WTAs, during which the Management Side confirmed that approximately three quarters had been submitted to date, a similar position to the same time last year. A significant amount of work had taken place on this issue, including the delivery of sessions at area meetings, and progress had been made. However, whilst recognising the need for WTAs to be submitted, there was also a need for latitude where staff were under pressure.

The Teachers' Side drew attention to the timeline in LNCT Agreement 17, the purpose of which was to prevent late submission of WTAs, and suggested that further discussions on how to tackle the issue would be beneficial.

In response to a question, the Teachers' Side explained that concerns raised previously included onerous weekly meetings and staff reporting that they were having to do more than what was on the WTA.

Whilst appreciating that WTAs were individual, the Teachers' Side would like to see a reasonable amount of remaining time for staff to prioritise at their discretion.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

iv. Reporting

Last session, in an attempt to tackle the unnecessary bureaucracy caused by current reporting processes, the Council had developed continuous approaches to profiling and reporting to support increased family engagement. The focus had been to enhance the dialogue with learners and their families, whilst strengthening the relationship between profiling and reporting to ensure learners and their families felt confident in the learning process.

During session 2016/17 nine training events had taken place in November and May, across all four geographical areas, to introduce the Highland continuous profiling and reporting model. The Quality Improvement Team had been provided with an audit tool to monitor how schools had been embedding continuous approaches to profiling and reporting and the target was to have all schools using this model with a short end of year summative report by 2019/20. Highland's support materials for profiling and reporting had been published on Education

Scotland's National Improvement Hub as a model of good practice.

A package to support profiling and reporting within the Early Years would now be developed with school and partner centre nurseries, co-ordinated by a Quality Improvement Officer, a Development Officer, Early Years Education Support Officers and an Early Years Educational Psychologist.

Some secondary schools were also starting to explore a similar format in the form of snapshots of learning within literacy and numeracy as a form of interim reporting in addition to subject reports.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side welcomed any initiative that reduced the workload of staff. However, as with any new method, the first year had involved extra work and an assurance was sought that lessons learnt would be utilised, with examples of both best practice and pitfalls/things to avoid being made available to schools for reference over the coming year. Concerns had been raised regarding significant workload issues, when not managed correctly, in relation to the use of online journals for reporting on individual children which required such things as photographs to be attached as well as written comments on strengths, next steps etc. SPP comments continued to cause concern and it was questioned whether they were fit for purpose, even after alteration.

The Head of Education confirmed that he was happy to take on board the request that examples of best practice and pitfalls/things to avoid be made available to schools.

In response to a question, it was explained that the continuous profiling and reporting model was being rolled out on a phased basis and a position statement would be sought from the lead officer. The implementation of the model was a positive step in that it moved away from burdensome end of year reports and it was important that any issues were addressed at an early stage.

Thereafter, having emphasised the importance of reporting to parents, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position;
- ii. **AGREED** that examples of best practice and pitfalls/things to avoid be made available to schools for reference; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a position statement on the roll out of the continuous profiling and reporting model be sought from the lead officer.

6. Whole School Reviews of Job-Sizing of Promoted Posts and Principal Teacher (PT) Entitlement Reviews in Secondary Schools

A review of whole school job-sizing and PT over-entitlement in secondary schools had continued. A PT management restructure had now been completed in two secondary schools. A proposed structure had been shared with staff for consultation in a further secondary school and it was hoped that recruitment would take place before the end of the current session. Initial discussions had been held with three further secondary schools who met the

review criteria and it was hoped to progress a PT review in those schools during the course of next session. All PT vacancies in secondary schools continued to be monitored in terms of entitlement, with Head Teachers being asked to make interim management arrangements where appropriate in schools where entitlement was exceeded.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side acknowledged the work carried out by both Head Teachers and Workforce Planning staff to ensure that the structures that had been arrived at were both suitable and sustainable and took into account the needs of existing staff. In relation to future reviews, the Teachers' Side looked forward to being fully involved in the process as outlined in LNCT 3.

In response to a question, the Workforce Planning and Staffing Manager explained that details of the schools to be reviewed during the next session would be provided when the list had been finalised.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

7. Review of HR Policies – Flexible Working

The Council believed that flexible working could increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity. Discussion between Council HR Services and the LNCT Management and Teachers' Sides would continue on the current provision for flexible working for teachers and associated professionals. An update would be provided at a future meeting of the LNCT.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side commented that flexible working was an essential facility for any staff member. However, due to the nature of teaching, flexibility was limited. That being the case, it was necessary to fully explore what was available and issue policy/guidance tailored to the needs of the profession. Currently, staff were able to seek a reduction in hours and the Teachers' Side wished to see this being offered on a temporary basis, thus giving staff the ability to reduce their hours after particular events in their lives, allowing them to remain effective in their position. It was suggested that staff should also have the facility to increase their hours, particularly where there was a shortage of staff.

In response, the Workforce Planning and Staffing Manager explained that, initially, a flexible approach had been taken to staff wishing to temporarily reduce their hours. However, in practice, it was difficult to manage across the whole of the school estate and could lead to issues in relation to temporary cover staff. Where there were vacancies in a school, there were no barriers to part-time staff seeking to increase their hours. The issues could be explored in more depth as work progressed

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

8. Review of LNCT Agreements

Following recent discussions at the LNCT Executive it had been agreed that a number of LNCT Agreements were out of date and required to be refreshed. Discussion had focussed on the need to review the following agreements:-

a. LNCT 22 Student Teacher Placement Policy

This Agreement had previously been approved in 2006 as a protocol to summarise the key responsibilities of both the local authority and schools in relation to student teacher placements. With the current increased numbers of students undertaking initial teacher education courses and the consequent increased demand for student placements, there was a need to continue to improve the co-ordination, provision and quality of student teacher placements. Joint work had taken place over the past year to revise the current agreement which focussed on the responsibilities of Teacher Education Institutions, local authorities and schools.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side commented that work on this Agreement had commenced in December 2016 and, through regular and frequent contact with Ms A Mackay, Strategic Quality Improvement Officer, to whom thanks were expressed, an acceptable position had been reached.

It was highlighted that an incorrect version of the Agreement had been circulated in error and Members were asked to refer to the version that had been tabled. The main differences were section 5 and the Appendix, which specified the roles of school staff and the protocol to be followed where there were perceived difficulties.

Having emphasised the importance of early identification of issues, the Committee **APPROVED** LNCT 22 Student Teacher Placement Policy as tabled.

b. LNCT 23 Appointments Procedures – Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers

Initial discussion had taken place with the LNCT Teachers' Side to review the procedures for the appointment of Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers, incorporating the requirement for the Scottish Qualification for Headship. A working group had been established to take this forward. Discussions were ongoing and it was hoped that a revised LNCT 23 could be presented to the LNCT in November 2017.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side, whilst appreciating that there were capacity issues on both sides, expressed disappointment at the lack of engagement on this matter, the working group having only met once on 21 March 2017. In addition, concern was expressed that an out-of-date version of LNCT 23 had remained live on the Council's website. Progress had been made through informal discussion. However, concern remained over issues such as references, LNCT involvement and administration.

The Workforce Planning and Staffing Manager confirmed that discussions would continue with a view to presenting a revised Agreement to the November meeting, which would be to everyone's advantage.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

9. Work Plan 2017/18

i. National Improvement Framework

The following were the next steps for 2017/18:-

- Continue to support schools in the delivery of the six identified National Improvement Framework drivers
- Support schools with implementing the changes to SQA national qualifications
- Support schools in the delivery of their PEF plans
- Share good practice of closing the attainment gap strategies across schools
- Support schools in the implementation of the national assessments

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

ii. Management of Schools

The following were the next steps for 2017/18:-

Workstream 1 – Curriculum Delivery

- The implementation of ICT in learning strategy – implementation begins in August. Three Associated Schools Groups (ASGs) would be implemented in 2017/18
- Set out a strategy for the integration of the school and college curriculum delivery

Workstream 2 – School Management Structures

- Set out a monitoring and review process for the phase one ASGs
- Revised stakeholder processes developed
- Phase 2 ASGs implemented
- Review and revise the existing DSM guidance

Workstream 3 – Support to Schools

- Pilot ASGs to deliver the revised approaches to school administration

Workstream 4 – Early Learning and Childcare

- Establish a plan for the roll out of 1140 hours in 2020
- Continue to review and provide support to the 7 schools delivering nursery provision through an early level class setting

Workstream 5 – Workforce Planning and Recruitment

- Review and revise the generic interview process
- Review and revise the permanent supply process

Workstream 6 – Leadership

- Leadership and management training delivered to phase 1 schools
- Development of support structures for Head Teachers

In response to a question regarding Workstream 2 and whether any particular changes to the DSM guidance were envisaged, the Head of Education explained that the existing guidance was outdated and not fit for purpose. The review was a significant task and work had commenced but there were no specific proposals at this stage.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

iii. **Whole School Job-Sizing Reviews/PT Entitlement Reviews**

The review of whole school job-sizing and PT over-entitlement in secondary schools would continue. In addition to those schools already identified as meeting the criteria, a further review would take place following confirmation of the teacher census figures in November 2017. A work plan and timetable would be drawn up in consultation with the LNCT Teachers' Side in respect of secondary schools that met the review criteria for this session. Head Teachers would be briefed and a full communication exercise would be undertaken with the promoted staff in the schools affected as per LNCT 3.

It was highlighted that any PT not appointed, or appointed to a post at a lower grade, as part of a new management structure in a secondary school would be entitled to three years cash conservation of salary at their previous grade as per the National Conditions of Service for Teachers.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

iv. **Violence and Aggression**

Joint work would continue to monitor violence and aggression statistics and to develop strategies around training and intervention with the Head of Additional Support Services.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side, whilst welcoming the production of statistics regarding incidents within schools, asked what would be done about issues that were identified. All staff within schools were expected to collect and analyse data on their students to inform practice and next steps and the Teachers' Side wished to see the authority demonstrate good practice and take action where there were particular students/schools/staff regularly involved. It was suggested that the following questions should be asked:

1. Is the student being supported within the most suitable educational establishment?
2. Are the accommodation and resources available fit for purpose?
3. Are staff suitably trained?
4. Are staffing levels adequate?

In addition, there were mixed reviews about the new online reporting method as there appeared to be repetition involved and staff required

time to familiarise themselves with its use.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position; and
- ii. **AGREED** that action be taken where particular students/schools/ staff were regularly involved in incidents of violence and aggression.

v. Review of HR Policies – Flexible Working

As previously documented, the Council acknowledged the benefits to be gained by flexible working and discussion between Council HR Services and the LNCT Management and Teachers' Sides would continue to agree a framework for flexible working for teachers and associated professionals. An update would be provided at a future meeting of the LNCT.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

vi. Review of LNCT Agreements

Following recent discussions at the LNCT Executive it had been agreed that a number of LNCT Agreements were potentially out of date and required to be refreshed. It would be beneficial to undertake a general review of all LNCT agreements with a view to identifying individual agreements which required to be updated and this would form part of the work plan for 2017/18.

During discussion, the Teachers' Side commented that this was something that other authorities had been undertaking and was overdue. Particular reference was made to LNCT 6 which still referred to 23.5 hours contact in primary schools. If the review was to be tackled properly, more regular negotiation meetings needed to take place. That being the case, and given that the Management of Schools project and promoted post restructuring were ongoing, it was requested that consideration be given to increasing the ability of staff to be released from school to attend meetings, working groups etc. In addition, it was requested that future formal meetings of the LNCT take place within teachers' working hours.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position;
- ii. **AGREED** that consideration be given to increasing the ability of staff to be released from school to attend meetings, working groups etc; and
- iii. **AGREED** that, where possible, future meetings of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers take place within teachers' working hours.

The meeting concluded at 3.30 pm.