

The Highland Council

Minutes of the **Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers** held in Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 19 June 2019 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Representing the Management Side:

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)
Mr A Whiteford (EIS)

Also Present:

Mr J Vance, Joint Secretary, Management Side
Mr A Bell, Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side

Officials in Attendance:

Ms A MacPherson, Workforce Planning and Staffing Manager, Care and Learning Service
Ms R Bell, Policy Officer, Care and Learning Service
Ms J Sikkema, HR Business Partner, Chief Executive's Office
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Mr J Finlayson in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms L Munro, Mr A Mackinnon, Mr M Reiss and Ms K Currie.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 14 November 2018

The Committee **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 14 November 2018.

4. Work Plan Review 2018/19

There had been circulated Report No LNCT/01/19 dated 10 June 2019 by the Interim Head of Education.

During discussion, the Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, commented that the cut

in travel and training had had a considerable impact on the morale of teachers across all sectors and it was hoped this would be improved upon over the coming year. Professional Update submissions had been the worst in Scotland recently and it was hoped that the situation this year had not led to a repeat of the previous two years' low position. There were skilled and committed staff in Highland who wanted to do their best for the children and young adults in their care but this was something they currently felt unable to do. The Teachers' Side had worked hard with the Authority to mitigate the negative effects on individuals and would continue to do so. However, a large number of teachers over the previous session had faced great uncertainty about their roles, remits and future job prospects. This has had a further significant impact upon staff morale, health and wellbeing, particularly in relation to clustering, restructuring and cuts to Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision.

In relation to LNCT 16, discussions had been very productive and had led to an increased understanding of the situation for all involved. Thanks were expressed to Beth Brown, Strategic Quality Improvement Manager, and Donald Paterson, Quality Improvement Officer, for their invaluable efforts. If the reviews planned for the coming year were progressed in a similar manner it would be very positively received.

With regard to the proposed additional two in-service days for session 2019/20, the Joint Secretary, Management Side, summarised a document that had been prepared for distribution to teachers, and which had been provided to the Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, describing the proposals for the seven, in total, service days. The Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, welcomed the fair approach that had been taken.

In relation to the proposal to move to a set school Easter holiday in the first two weeks of April, it was recognised that some fine-tuning would be required depending when first day of April fell.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

i. **NOTED** the position in respect of:

- National Improvement Framework
- Sustainable Education in Highland Communities
- Whole School Job Sizing Reviews/PT Entitlement Reviews
- Review of LNCT Agreements;

ii. **APPROVED:**

- LNCT 16 Self-evaluation for Self-improvement
- The proposal to move to a set school Easter holiday in the first two weeks of April from school session 2021/22
- The additional two in-service days for session 2019/20; and

iii. **AGREED** that the document setting out the proposals for in-service days in session 2019-20 be circulated to Members and schools.

5. **Work Plan 2019/20**

There had been circulated Report No LNCT/02/19 dated 10 June 2019 by the

Interim Head of Education.

During discussion, the Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, having observed that the Sustainable Education in Highland Communities programme did not appear in the Work Plan for 2019/20, it was explained that it had subsumed as part of the education transformation agenda.

In relation to the review of LNCT Agreements, the Chair welcomed the inclusion of LNCT 23: Appointments Procedures – Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers. Whilst the Agreement had been approved relatively recently, a number of issues had been identified that merited further discussion.

The Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, commented that grave concerns remained over the potential negative impact of the cuts to ASN provision upon all children and young people within Highland. It was believed that the education of all learners would be disrupted and it was not accepted that the impact could be mitigated simply by training mainstream classroom teachers. Concern was also expressed regarding the health and wellbeing of the workforce who had suffered a great deal of stress and uncertainty as a result of the project. At this stage, 11 days before the end of the school session, some staff were still unaware of where they would be working in August, or what they would be teaching. This uncertainty had been exacerbated by a perceived lack of communication and transparency, which was mirrored in the management of change to the Quality Improvement provision centrally within the Authority, and the proposed reduction in management time for Early Learning and Childcare settings within the move to 1140 hours of provision. However, the Teachers' Side looked forward to a continued effective working partnership for the coming year, and this was echoed by the Management Side.

In response, the Joint Secretary, Management Side, explained that one to one meetings had taken place with Quality Improvement staff and every effort had been made to be as transparent as possible, and to circulate information as timeously as possible, in what had been a complex HR process. He gave a commitment that this would continue.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the position in respect of:

- National Improvement Framework
- Improvement Agenda
- Additional Support Needs Transformation Project
- Early Learning and Childcare
- Whole School Job-sizing Reviews/ PT Entitlement Reviews
- Review of LNCT Agreements

The meeting concluded at 2.20 pm.