

## The Highland Council

Minutes of the **Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT)** held remotely on Tuesday 3 December 2024 at 3.05 pm.

### Present:

#### Representing the Management Side:

Ms S Atkin  
Mrs M Cockburn  
Mr J Finlayson  
Mr C Munro

#### Representing the Teachers' Side:

Ms M Evans (EIS)  
Mr L MacKenzie (EIS)  
Mr S Mackenzie (SSTA)  
Ms G Warburton (EIS)

### In attendance:

Ms K Lackie, Assistant Chief Executive - People  
Mr A Bell, Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side  
Ms F Grant, Chief Officer – Secondary Education/Joint Secretary, Management Side  
Ms A Jansson, Chief Officer – Early Years and Primary Education  
Ms A MacPherson, Head of Resources  
Ms R Bell, Policy Officer  
Ms M Murray, Principal Committee Officer  
Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

### Mr J Finlayson in the Chair

### Business

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr D Louden, Mr D Millar and Mr D Macpherson.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements

The Committee **NOTED** the following:-

Mr C Munro made a general Transparency Statement on the basis that he had formerly been a primary teacher in Highland and a close family member was currently a primary school teacher in Highland but, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

#### 3. Minutes of Meeting held on 5 June 2024

The Committee **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 5 June 2024.

#### 4. Work Plan Update 2023/24

There had been circulated Report No LNCT/3/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – People.

During discussion, the Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, made the following comments:-

- Violence and Aggression - it was understood that the data from the survey that had been carried out was available but had yet to be fully analysed. It was clear that incidents of violence and aggression were increasing in number and severity, with staff feeling unsafe in the workplace, and the Teachers' Side looked forward to working with the Management Side on this vitally important piece work;
- LNCT 4 Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures - staffing and other issues meant that the review of the Council's Disciplinary Policy would be starting afresh in the new year. As indicated in the report, the updated Guidance and Resolution Policy was still being piloted and would be presented to a future Corporate Resources Committee. The Teachers' Side position was that the SNCT framework could not be varied and should continue to be used, and it was hoped that could be agreed in the near future. Currently, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures were included in the same LNCT Agreement and there was potential for confusion in terms of protocol, so the intention was to move to two separate Agreements;
- LNCT 16 Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement – in relation to the proposed working group, which included Head Teachers, it was queried whether Head Teachers were to be considered as management for the purposes of this Agreement. If so, the Teachers' Side would seek suitable equal representation from non-management staff across the Unions. It was accepted that Head Teachers needed to know what was going on in their schools to ensure learning and teaching was of a good standard. However, the practice of unannounced and undiscussed visits was not acceptable. Going forward, there was a need for a truly collegiate approach. Quality professional dialogue had to be embedded in practice for any type of visit, whether internal to the school or external involving Collaborative Leads or other officers of the Education Authority. This would ensure an understanding of the focus of the visit and include feedback, be it for an individual, a department or school management;
- LNCT 24 Code of Practice on Use of Temporary Contracts for Teaching Staff – work had progressed, and it was hoped an agreed position could be reached to allow it to be implemented ahead of the LNCT in June 2025. This would be helpful as Easter onwards was when staff on fixed-terms contracts started to gain their right to a permanent contract, and a staffing exercise took place before the summer to ensure all schools had the staff they needed for the start of the new session;
- LNCT 37 Special Leave Policy – amendments included the addition of safe leave for victims of domestic violence, and the Carer Positive Policy, and agreement was likely to be reached well ahead of the LNCT in June 2025;
- LNCT 38 Flexible Working Policy – the changes were legislative, for example, there was now a right to two statutory requests for flexible working per year where there had previously been a right to one statutory request per year. Again, agreement was likely to be reached ahead of the LNCT in June 2025, and it would be a case of homologating the updated Agreement at the June meeting; and
- Policy outlining the procedures for job-sizing – unfortunately, not much progress had been made on this matter but it was hoped to have a more firm position by the June meeting.

Further discussion took place on job-sizing, during which it was explained that national guidance was that every Education Authority should have a policy setting out the job-sizing procedures to be followed. To date, there had been no written procedures in

Highland. There was practice in place, and clear guidance had been provided by Internal Audit, but it would be helpful to formalise the arrangements in a policy.

The need for more job-sizing training for teaching staff having been emphasised, and it having been confirmed there were volunteers, it was explained that such training was provided nationally but the opportunity would be taken as soon as it was available.

The Joint Secretary, Management Side, having raised the matter of digital learning, the Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side, confirmed that the Teachers' Side would be lodging a written dispute in that regard which would clearly detail its position. The LNCT Recognition & Procedure Agreement set out the procedure to be followed in such instances, the first stage being to meet to discuss the dispute to see if it could be resolved locally.

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

- i. Violence and Aggression; and
- ii. Review of LNCT Agreements.

The meeting concluded at 3.20 pm.