

JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHING STAFF

Minute of virtual meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff (JNCT) held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 8 December 2020 at 2.30pm.

Present: **Representing Perth and Kinross Council**
Councillors J Duff, J Rebbeck and C Shiers; S Devlin, M Donaghy, G Doogan, S Hagney, S Johnston and D Macluskey (substituting for D MacLeod) (all Education and Children's Services) and P Johnstone (Corporate & Democratic Services).

Representing Teachers' Associations
L Gibb, L-J Grant, M Laurie, C Rose, T Summers and C Weston (all EIS); M Mackie (SSTA) and S Topen-Cooper (NASUWT).

In Attendance: F Mackay (Education & Children's Services); A McAuley, Joint Secretary (Trade Unions); C Flynn, Joint Secretary (management Side) and C Irons (Corporate and Democratic Services).

Observing: J Donnelly, Education & Children's Services

Apologies: D MacLeod
Councillor J Duff, Convener, Presiding.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted and noted as above.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ELECTED MEMBERS ONLY)

There were no declarations of interest made in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

3. MINUTES

The minute of meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff of 22 September 2020 was submitted and approved as a correct record, noting that at item 7/8(i) it should read SNCT and not SNTC.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Working Time Agreements (Item 9 refers)

C Weston provided an update on the Working Time Agreements advising that she would share the latest information with G Doogan and D MacLeod to agree a way forward for all Teachers.

5. INCIDENTS OF DISTRESSED AND/OR CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR – QUARTERLY STATISTICAL REPORT TERM 1- ACADEMIC SESSION 2020-21

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (G/20/146) providing a quarterly statistical report on incidents of distressed and/or challenging behaviour in schools in Term 1: 12 August to 2 October 2020.

F Mackay advised the report presented the statistics in a new format following a short-life working group and noted the low figures due to the exceptional times and no figures being available for part of term 3 and all of term 4 due to home learning during lockdown.

The Teachers Association representatives raised concern that while members had attended the working group they had not been fully consulted on the new reporting format presented today.

C Weston stated not all aspects of violence and aggression were included within the new format making it difficult to identify trends and draw comparisons.

S Topen-Cooper added that he had previously expressed concern of not differentiating between violence and aggression and incidents of distressed and/or challenging behaviour and the previous reporting format referring to violence and aggression was preferable and requested further discussion on such changes.

F Mackay apologised that teacher representatives did not feel the format had been discussed and proposed the working group reform to consider improvements to the reporting and reviewing of incidents and support.

S Johnston re-iterated the apology and hoped further discussion would enable a new format to be agreed taking account of violence and aggression and distressing and/or challenging behaviour as well as providing information and support to improve current practices. S Johnston agreed the report should include violence and aggression and exclusions but was cautious of trying to cover too much in one report. S Johnston also agreed it was important to analyse trends for needs to be met.

The Committee agreed there would be further discussion by the short-life working group to agree a new reporting format for violence and aggression and distressed and/or challenging behaviour.

6. BUDGET UPDATE

The Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) provided a verbal update on the current position regarding the budget position for Education and Children's Services and the Council.

S Devlin advised the primary aim for the Council was to deliver a balanced, lawful and achievable budget and that Education and Children's Services five priorities were unchanged – Best Start; Learning and Achievement; Health and Wellbeing; Care and Equity and Safe and Protected.

S Devlin stated the full financial impact of Covid-19 would not be known for some time and as it would not be known for the budget setting in March 2021 a different approach would be needed. It was noted that there had been a shortfall when the budget was set in March 2020 and previously agreed savings had not been met plus there had been significant additional expenditure due to the pandemic.

The Committee noted the update.

7. COVID-19 UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2020

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (G/20/147) providing an update on Education and Children's Services Recovery Plan.

S Devlin acknowledged that all staff in schools were working tirelessly and many of the new ways of working would continue and some aspects of school life would be changed forever.

S Devlin referred to arrangements for contact tracing over the Christmas holidays and advised that Public Health had confirmed schools could stay open up to Christmas as planned and there were no plans to move to blended or remote learning.

C Weston advised teachers were not seeking additional holidays but wanted to see a move to remote learning to protect all and reduce the risk of the area moving to further restrictions in Tier 4.

The Committee noted report G/20/147 and the appendices to the report listing the guidance issued since September 2020 and providing a summary of Covid-19 cases within schools and nurseries.

8. EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020/21

There was submitted the Education Improvement Plan 2020/21 (G/20/148).

S Johnston advised the Plan was a statutory document which the Council was duty bound to produce even at this time although the focus was now on recovery and wellbeing. There was a renewed focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap and what could be done to remedy any impact that there had been around the widening of equalities of outcome experienced by children and young people with the purpose of the Plan being Reconnection, Recovery and Renewal.

There followed discussion on the Plan with reference to closing the attainment gap, engagement of pupils in remote learning and the experience for teachers and engagement with parents.

The Committee noted the Plan for 2020/21.

9. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

A verbal update was provided by D Macluskey on progress and achievement in schools. It was noted there had been a pilot project in primaries, tracking a young persons' journey within a CfE level which is due to be rolled out to other schools in this academic year. This will be deferred in secondary until August 2021 to take into account the time that will be required to address assessment in the senior phase.

D Macluskey added that the pilot had gathered views of pupils, parents and teachers and a shared understanding was crucial. It was acknowledged a different approach was needed to the new process in light of the cancellation of exams this session and further work would be undertaken.

The Committee noted the update provided.

10. VIRTUAL MEETINGS

S Johnston referred to guidance which had been issued to schools advising on conducting safe virtual meetings. Teachers were now regularly taking part in virtual meetings and this was likely to continue.

A survey of parents had shown they were keen to use virtual meetings for contact with schools, such as for parent contact evenings and parents appreciated continuing face-to-face contact in the current circumstances. S Johnston added that while guidance had been issued it was for each school to determine when and how virtual meetings would be used.

C Weston thanked officers for the guidance and that advice was available when needed but there were individual circumstances to address so appreciated that it was for each school to decide what suited best.

11. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS TO JUNE 2021

It was noted that meetings would be held on 16 March and 15 June 2021 (AGM) and that discussion would be held with union representatives if required prior to the next meeting.

12. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There were no other items of business for discussion.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted the next meeting would be held on 16 March 2021.