



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE: TEACHING STAFF

Minute of Meeting held in Council Chamber,
Council Offices, Stornoway on Tuesday, 19
November 2024 at 10.30am.

PRESENT	Ms Karen Graham (Chair) Mr Paul Finnegan (Vice-Chair) Mr Calum Maclean Mr Angus McCormack Dr Frances Murray Mr George Murray	Mr Roderick MacNeil Mr Niall Thomson Mr Jamie Macleod Mr Sam Jones Mr Donald A Macleod
APOLOGIES	Mr Iain M Macleod	Ms Catriona Campbell
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE	Ms Mary Clare Ferguson Ms Carmen Macdonald	Mr Derek Mackay Ms Fiona Knape

The Chair ruled items 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 as urgent to enable the matters to be considered prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 27 August 2024 1 The Minute of the Meeting of 27 August 2024 was **approved**.

Matters Outstanding

With reference to item 5 of the minute of the meeting of 27 August 2024, the Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services indicated that Scottish Government funding of £10K to support relationships and behaviour training for school-based staff was only available to non-teaching staff.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

Severe Weather Arrangements 2 The LNCT Joint Secretary (Teaching Staff) submitted a Report which sought confirmation of the arrangements for teaching staff in the event of school closures due to adverse weather. The Report recognised that all employees of the Comhairle have a duty to make every effort to report for work on time each working day, but that there may be occasions when weather/climate/environmental conditions are so severe that some employees will be prevented from reporting to work or will report late and/or need to leave work early.

In discussion, it was noted that the both the Education and Children's Services Policy in relation to adverse weather, and the Comhairle's Adverse Weather Policy were currently being reviewed and revised. The revised Education and Children's Services Policy in relation to Adverse Weather would detail the arrangements for school closures due to bad weather.

It was agreed that the draft revised Education and Children's Services Policy in relation to Adverse Weather would be shared with members of the LNCT for review and comment.

Organisational Development Strategy 2024-2030	3	<p>The Chief Executive submitted a Report which detailed the draft Organisational Development Strategy 2024-2030. The Report noted that the vision of the new Strategy is to create a healthy and sustainable workplace which will promote the achievement of corporate goals and personal development. The Strategy aims to develop a Dynamic Working environment over the next six years to 2030 through three integrated frameworks to Work Well, Work Smart and Work Sustainably. To keep each area of work focussed, there is a draft Action Plan for each framework included in the Strategy.</p> <p>It was agreed, insofar as the interests of the Committee were concerned, to note the draft Organisational Development Strategy 2024-2030 appended to the Report.</p>
Long Service Award	4	<p>The Chief Executive submitted a Report which sought approval of the revised Long Service Award Scheme. The Report indicated that the Long Service Award Scheme was last revised in 2011. Under the current scheme eligibility is based on retiring over the age of 60 with at least 20 years' service or upon completion of 35 years continuous service, regardless of age.</p> <p>The Report noted that the current State Pension age in the UK is 66 years old for both men and women, however, for those born after 5 April 1960, the state pension age is set to rise to 67 between 2026 and 2028. Employees can now continue to work past their state pension age, there is no longer a default retirement age. The earliest age to retire and access the SPPA pension is 55, unless granted ill health benefits. To ensure continued compliance with the Equality Act 2010, the Long Service Award Scheme has been updated, as detailed in appendix 1, to remove reference to the age of 60. The policy has been formatted and some terminology updated, no other material changes have been made to the policy.</p> <p>It was agreed, insofar as the interests of the Committee were concerned, to approve the revised Long Service Award Scheme.</p>
Special Award	Leave 5	<p>The Chief Executive submitted a Report which proposed the addition of the Hebrides Mountain Rescue Team to the list of Lifeline Agencies recognised by the Comhairle in respect to the Special Leave policy. The Report noted that the Hebrides Mountain Rescue Team joined Scottish Mountain Rescue in 2011 officially becoming part of the national rescue services accessed via calling the Emergency services number on 999. Currently other volunteer emergency services are recognised in the policy including Coastguard Rescue and Special Constables.</p> <p>It was agreed, insofar as the interests of the Committee were concerned, to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="512 1487 1479 1547">(1) note the change of role of Hebrides Mountain Rescue Team and the value it provides to the community; and <li data-bbox="512 1585 1479 1641">(2) approve the amending of section 2.4 (a) Lifeline Agencies in the Special Leave Policy to include the Hebrides Mountain Rescue Team.
Special Leave Policy and Faith-Based Holidays	6	<p>With reference to item 9 of the Minute of the Meeting of 27 August 2024, the Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services submitted a Report in relation to Special Leave for Faith-Based Events. The Report indicated that there are insufficient grounds to make the proposed change to the policy. The annual school calendar is not specifically or intentionally designed around Christian holidays and is primarily constructed around creation of four terms of approximately equal length and to align, where possible, with existing recognised national holidays.</p> <p>The Report further noted that there is no evidence of demand from employees for such a provision to be established. This was not included in the original Report, nor has the service seen representation or request from employees for such a provision to be made.</p>

It was agreed to make no changes to the Special Leave Policy in respect of faith-based events.

Monitoring of 7
Schools' Agreement on the
Working Week/Year 2024

The Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which provided an update on the monitoring of submitted Working Time Agreements for 2024-25 in compliance with the LNCT Agreement: Criteria for the Working Week (2008) and sought agreement on the programme for school-based reviews of agreements accordingly.

The Report indicated that the LNCT agreement Criteria on the Working Week: Monitoring Procedures (2008) requires that information be presented to the autumn meeting of LNCT annually indicating the position regarding schools' compliance with the agreement.

The Report noted that returns were received from twenty-one Comhairle schools, including e-Sgoil. All schools completed and submitted documentation evidencing allocation of time in their school with appropriate signatures in place to confirm that agreements were reached locally with a trade union and/or staff representatives.

It was agreed that:

- (1) the LNCT Joint Secretary (Teaching Staff) would explore training options in relation to Working Time Agreements for teaching staff; and**
- (2) the LNCT Joint Secretary (Teaching Staff) would meet with the Chief Officer, Education to consider which two schools would be best placed for the LNCT to undertake a joint evaluation/ audit of working agreements.**

FINANCE

Finance and 8
Budget-Setting 2025-26

The Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which provided an update on budget position and budget setting for 2025 – 26. The Report noted that as a consequence of the on-going impact of the cyber-attack on the Comhairle's IT network, it is not possible to provide detailed reporting on the 2023-24 budget, but this is expecting to be resolved imminently. Interim internal monitoring and reporting indicate that the service is operating within budget for 2023-24.

The Comhairle is currently preparing for the setting of the 2025-26 budget, and it is forecast that this will be challenging and require further savings to be identified across all services. Work is underway at the moment to identify areas for potential efficiencies and savings for the consideration of elected members and for onwards consultation with the community. The budget position will remain uncertain until after the Scottish Budget Statement on 4 December 2024.

It was agreed to note the Report.

EDUCATION PROVISION

Local Workload 9
Survey

The LNCT Joint Secretary submitted a Report which detailed the results of a survey carried out by the EIS Local Association on workload, specifically related to Forward Planning. The Report indicated that the EIS nationally is running a campaign on tackling workload as part of their wider Stand Up for Quality Education Campaign. As part of this campaign, Local Associations were tasked with campaigning on an aspect pertinent to local experiences.

The Report noted that since the beginning of the new school session in August 2024, EIS members from a number of schools have contacted school reps as well as the LNCT Joint Secretary to express their concerns about the impact forward planning was having on their workload and also on their work/life balance.

It was decided therefore to survey members on their experience of forward planning to give us a clear picture of what the issues are, in order to be able to address these going forward.

It was agreed that the LNCT Joint Secretary (Teaching Staff) and the Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services would consider the outcome of the survey and submit a joint report to the next meeting.

Quality Assurance
and Classroom
Observations 10

The LNCT Joint Secretary submitted a Report which sought local agreement on Quality Assurance and Classroom Observations. The Report indicated that there is currently no local agreement on Quality Assurance and Classroom Observation in the Western Isles, the result being that there is a lack of consistency across schools, with individual schools doing their own thing regarding classroom observations; The establishment of a local agreement on Quality Assurance and Classroom Observations would ensure consistency across schools in the Comhairle area. Managers and teachers would be clear on what the expectations are and what constitutes good practice in this area.

It was agreed that the Joint Secretaries would review the Education and Children's Services Policy on Quality Assurance and Classroom Observation.

School Term and
Mid-Term Holidays
2025-26 Update 11

With reference to item 6 of the Minute of the Meeting of 27 August, the Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which detailed the findings of the consultation on the scheme of school term dates and mid-term holidays. The Report indicated that the school consultation had 21 responses, meaning that all but one school provided feedback through the consultation and all of them that did so had confirmed that they had consulted internally with staff before submitting. 15 of the schools also confirmed that they had consulted with their Parent Council about the calendar before submitting. This was advised but not required. The Report detailed the percentage returns and level of responses in relation to the consultation.

It was agreed to note the Report.

RELATED MATTERS

Proposed LNCT
Activity 2025 12

The Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which detailed options to consider the programme of work for the LNCT and date of meetings for 2025. The Report indicated that the constitution defines that there should be at least three meetings in each calendar year and, in respect of that, the following dates were proposed for 2025 ;

- Tuesday 4th March 2025
- Tuesday 10th June 2025
- Tuesday 18th November 2025

The Report noted that in terms of current business, there are two agreed sub-groups that will continue their work in 2025. The first is the Digital Learning and Harmonisation sub-group and it is important that progress is promptly made in the work of this group. The second group was constituted in 2024 and focuses on violence and aggression in schools.

The Report further noted that here are a number of LNCT agreement and codes of practice that have not been reviewed for a number of years. Some may only require a brief refresh to update any obsolete details, contacts, or role changes but others may require more significant review. In addition to reviewing current agreements, there may be new areas in which LNCT wishes to explore the establishment of agreements where there are currently none.

It was agreed;

- (1) that the LNCT would meet on; 4 March 2025; 10 June 2025 and 18 November 2025; and
- (2) that the priorities for review and development of agreements and codes of practice locally in 2025 would include Digital Learning and Harmonisation, Violence and Aggression, and Quality Assurance and Classroom Observations.

Barra and Vatersay Campus 13

The Chief Executive submitted a Report in relation to the Barra and Vatersay Campus; this Report was originally considered by the Education, Sport and Children's Services Committee on 24 September 2024 and detailed progress with the Campus.

It was noted that an update Report would be considered by the Education, Sport and Children's Services Committee on 26 November 2024, and that this would be shared with members of the Local Negotiating Committee: Teaching Staff.

It was agreed to note the Report.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Reports Outstanding 14

The Chief Executive submitted a Report which detailed the Reports Outstanding arising from decisions of the Committee.

It was agreed to note the Report.