

Minute of Meeting

Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 08 February 2022	14:00	Remotely via MS Teams,

REPRESENTING RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL MANAGEMENT

T Stewart, Head of Schools (Joint Secretary); J Calder, Head of Service (Curriculum and Quality); H Paterson, Head Teacher, Heriot Primary School; J Colquhoun, Education Manager (Development); A Hall, Education Manager (Development); and K Henry, Head Teacher, St Andrew’s Academy (Development) (all Children’s Services).

REPRESENTING RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL TEACHING STAFF

K Fella (Joint Secretary) M Russell, C Carson, Y Murray, D Tollan and T Millar (all EIS); J Liston (SSTA); L Gibson (NASUWT); and S McCrossan (Adviser to EIS).

IN ATTENDANCE

L Mullin, Principal HR Adviser, S Fanning, Principal HR & OD Adviser, P Shiach, Senior Committee Services Officer and J Barron, Assistant Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources).

APOLOGIES

Provost Cameron and Councillor J Paterson.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

In accordance with the terms of the local recognition and procedure agreement, which stated that the Chair of the Committee should alternate between the two sides comprising the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff, it was agreed that Craig Carson would chair this meeting of the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff.

DECIDED: That Craig Carson chair this meeting of the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff.

2 **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

There was submitted the Minute of the previous meeting held on 9 November 2021. With reference to Item 2, “updated” be replaced with “update”, and with reference to Item 8 “governed” by replaced by “governs”.

With reference to Item 5, “in every room”, should be replaced by “in every teaching space for one teaching day only”.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved subject to the amendments.

3 **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK**

There was submitted a report by Head of Schools regarding the Quality Improvement Framework. Since the first lockdown period in March 2020, our Quality Improvement Framework (QIF) has adapted and evolved to meet the rapidly changing needs of school and early years communities.

Concerns regarding the re-introduction of the Quality Improvement Visits were raised, it was advised that visits would be at the request at Head Teachers and these visits were not to bring any additional pressure to the school and to proceed with the agreement of members of staff.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report be noted; and

(b) That it be agreed that the ongoing and planned Quality Improvement activity be proportionate and should recognise the health and wellbeing and workload implications for Renfrewshire establishments during these challenging times.

4 **ABSENCE STATISTICS – QUARTER 2 AND QUARTER 3 OF 2021/22**

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Council’s absence statistics for period 2, ending 30 September and period 3, ending 31 December 2021.

The report provided information in relation to absence targets and how Services and categories of staff had performed against them. An analysis of the reasons for absence for the period was included within the report. Information was also provided supporting attendance activity levels by the Service and the overall number of days lost.

The absence statistics were broken down by service and category of staff, reasons for absence and progress made by services in relation to their supporting attendance action plans.

Concerns were raised by the Teaching Unions in connection with the increase of Covid-19 absences for quarter 2 and the lack of ability to monitor the CO2 in teaching areas over longer periods of time.

The Teaching Unions requested a breakdown of percentages of absences and requests for access to Counselling for teachers only rather than Council wide staff.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report on absence statistics for the second and third quarters of 2020/21 be noted; and

(b) That information on the on the percentages for absences and requests for access to Counselling for teachers only be brought to a future meeting and that the information be presented in a clearer format.

5 **CO2 MONITORING**

There was submitted a report by the Joint Secretary (Teachers' Side) relative to the Scottish Government guidance of weekly monitoring of classroom spaces.

Information from an EIS survey on ventilation in schools was shared by the Joint Secretary (Teachers side), which included statistics on teachers views on how well-ventilated classrooms were, the investigation of ventilation and procedures in place for raising concerns regarding ventilation.

Soft FM had carried out investigations in schools and had reported their findings back to the Corporate Management Team. The Corporate Management Team had approved monitors being placed in every school, several schools have fixed monitors previously installed, other schools require monitors in every classroom, and so far, 80,000 readings had been taken.

Concerns were raised regarding the gathering of information, and of actions taken once the information is passed back by Teaching staff, no information had been fed back to the Teaching Unions from Soft FM on any actions which would be carried out after the results of the readings had been analysed.

It was proposed that a meeting with the Teaching Unions, Soft FM and Project Managers be held to discuss the matter further, that clarification be given on the number of CO2 monitors available, advise if hard wired monitors which could be installed, and could monitors be requested where there were concerns regarding particular areas and that the Head of Facilities Management be invited to the next meeting of the JNC to advise on progress of installing CO2 monitors in schools.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That a meeting with Teaching Unions, Soft FM, Project Managers, Children Services and Health & Safety be arranged to discuss installation of monitors ventilation at the earliest; and
- (c) That the Head of Facilities Management be invited to the next meeting of the JNC on 22 March 2022.

6 HEALTH & WELLBEING

There was submitted a report by the Joint Secretary (Teachers' Side) relative to the EIS survey which was recently conducted on Health and Wellbeing of its members.

The results of the survey indicated the increased workload implications resulting from the impact of the Covid pandemic on teachers.

A Corporate Health Improvement Group had been introduced and all Unions would be involved in this group, where health and wellbeing could be discussed.

After Easter 2022 a calendar of events would be available in every school, including CLPL opportunities, which could assist with planning for the school year and offer assistance to employees in matters of health and wellbeing.

Regarding the reduction of contact hours by 90 minutes per week the Teaching Unions had hoped this would be in place by August 2022, but had been advised this would not be in place by that time.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) It was agreed that discussions were to take place between the Management and Teachers' Side at the Corporate Health Improvement Group around how school improvement plans could be adjusted to make a material impact on the workload pressures that were affecting the health and wellbeing of Renfrewshire teachers.

7 WIFI IN RENFREWSHIRE SCHOOLS

There was submitted a report by the Joint Secretary (Teachers' Side) relative to issues with Wi-Fi in schools.

The digital world had made the delivery of education increasingly dependent on technology. Teachers in Renfrewshire were reporting ongoing issues with insufficient Wi-Fi signal which was impacting on the ability to deliver planned lessons.

It was advised that there were more devices for teachers and children since the start of the pandemic, funded from the Scottish Government and from within Children's Services budget.

Next year a Refresh Programme would be introduced to ensure that computer kit within schools were fit for purpose. Head Teachers, Education Support Managers and Service Development Officers were involved in the decision-making process in this regard.

There was a plan for improving fibre connectivity across the Renfrewshire area, schools were aligning with this programme, and in every school there would be fully diverse band width, 5 gig band width connectivity for high schools and 1 gig band width connectivity for primary schools.

To support this increase in bandwidth an upgrade to existing infrastructure was required. From August 2023 there should be higher quality Wi-Fi in all schools and early years establishments.

The Digital Learning Manager had set up meetings with Service Delivery Officers, Education Support Managers and representatives from ICT to flag up any concerns in schools, and Teachers were asked to contact the ICT Helpdesk in the first instance and the Digital Learning Manager if issues were not being addressed.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report by noted;

(b) That management continue to advise on plans that were in place to improve the Wi-Fi infrastructure in Renfrewshire and timescales for introduction of the new infrastructure; and

(c) That the Digital Learning Manager advise Head Teachers of timescales for ICT to deal with enquires from Teachers.

8 LEAD TEACHER

There was submitted a report by the Joint Secretary (Teachers' Side) relative to recent SNCT agreements that had adopted both sabbaticals and lead teacher into the SNCT Handbook.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report be noted;

(b) That a working group be set up with the Management Side to progress the areas of sabbaticals once consultation was complete and lead teacher working groups once capacity was available to move towards a JNC agreement; and

(c) That an update is provided on progress on Working Groups at future meetings of JNC Teachers.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

DECIDED: That it be noted that the next meeting of the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff was scheduled for Tuesday, 22 March 2022 at 2.00 pm