

Renfrewshire Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

To: Renfrewshire Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

On: 26 March 2024

Local Government Budget and Maintenance of Teacher and Support Staff numbers

Report by
Joint Secretary (Teachers' Side)

Background

Renfrewshire Council recently approved its annual budget at a meeting on 29th February, 2024. The report by the Director of Finance and Resources, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 was approved at that full Council meeting.

In the statement it was made clear that elements of the budget downloaded to local Authorities by Scottish Government are contingent upon maintaining teacher numbers and support staff. The statement, presented by the Director of Finance and Resources and approved by the Council contained many statements relating to the current budget. In particular, the teachers' side wishes to highlight a few pertinent statements relative to the maintenance of staffing levels:

*“The settlement includes £145.5m to continue **to maintain teachers and support staff** as well as £242m to support teacher pay uplifts. ...funding is conditional upon the agreement that, by the end March 2024, the assurance framework being sought by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills is in place and that the new joint Education Assurance Board has been established...”*

Par 4.2 (b) - bullet point 4

And

*In addition, the Council has received a letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills which outlines a change of approach from the Scottish Government in relation to the £145.5 million in the settlement related to teacher numbers ... **the Cabinet Secretary is***

concerned with the reduction in teacher numbers nationally, and has therefore decided that this funding will be allocated to councils via specific resource grants, and those grants will be conditional on councils agreeing at the outset to maintain teacher numbers...The base budget outlined in ... this report is based on an assumption that this funding – estimated to be £4.801 million – will be received; however in the event the associated conditions of the grant are unacceptable, this funding will be at risk.

Para 4.4

And

Children's Services...

...Funding in relation to teacher numbers has been assumed within the grant allocation from the Scottish Government. This funding will however be formally ringfenced with associated conditions, ... the Council must remain alert to the possibility that some or all of this £4.801 million of funding may be retained by the Scottish Government if the associated conditions are not satisfied....

Para 5.11

And

As outlined ... there is a risk that the income related to teacher numbers is now subject to specific grant conditions. Should the Council not be able to satisfy these conditions, the estimated deficit above will increase....

Para 11.2

Action

- The Teachers' side is seeking assurances that all conditions related to maintaining of teacher numbers will be satisfied and are seeking an assurance that the numbers of teachers and associated support staff will be maintained in line with conditions linked to the download of the Council's budget allocation.
- The Teachers' side are seeking to be advised that by the end March 2024, the assurance framework being sought by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills is in place and that the new joint Education Assurance Board has been established and the teachers' side is seeking further confirmation of this.
- The Teachers' side is seeking assurances that Renfrewshire Council has communicated an agreement to the Cabinet Secretary to maintain support staff and teacher numbers now that the budget has been agreed.