

APPENDIX I

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (TEACHERS)

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 JANUARY 1997 AT
1400 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS,
LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Councillors Drew McIntyre, Irene Reeves, Ronald Brailsford, Provost Robert Stirling and Councillor Robert Taylor; Iain Harvey, Amanda Fullarton, Alexandria S B Smith, Bryce Wilson, John McCracken and Norman Bissell (representing EIS); Andrew Batton (representing SSTA); John McCallum (representing NASUWT) and John Kelly (representing PAT).

ATTENDING: John Mulgrew, Director of Education; Sue Angus, Depute Director of Education; Jennifer Wallace, Depute Director of Education; Graham Haugh, Depute Director of Personnel; Janice Shaw, Principal Administrative Officer (Education); Bill Walkinshaw, Principal Administrative Officer and Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Tommy Farrell and David Sneller.

CHAIR: Iain Harvey, Vice Chair.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

1. The Committee resolved that under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 11 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. There were submitted and noted Minutes (circulated) of the meeting of 24 September 1996.

**SCHOOL SECURITY AND VETTING OF ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

3. The Depute Directors of Education reported on the action and initiatives which were being pursued by the Department of Education as a result of the decisions of the Education Committee in the light of the recommendations of the report by Lord Cullen on the Inquiry into the shootings at Dunblane Primary School as they related to school security and the vetting of adults working with children and young people.

In relation to school security, the Depute Director (Jennifer Wallace) explained that the Department's Health and Safety Officer, following consultation with Head Teachers, had undertaken a risk assessment and had issued good practice guidance and initial recommendations to improve safety in each establishment to Head Teachers; Head Teachers had been provided with reports on conferences on

the outcome of the Inquiry; progress was being made in respect of the formulation of school safety plans through a Steering Group which had been established for this purpose, working in consultation with Head Teachers, School Boards and on which this JCC was represented; and progress on the formulation of a strategic plan for school security which prioritised security measures over a three year programme, commencing with the introduction of basic measures which it was anticipated would be followed by ongoing improvements and upgrading.

In respect of the vetting of adults working with children and young people, the Depute Director of Education (Sue Angus) confirmed that staff within the Education Department, and indeed persons who had substantial access to school pupils were checked with the Scottish Criminal Records Office before being employed.

A Scottish Office Working Group had been set up to look at the implications of the Cullen Inquiry with regard to procedures for vetting and accreditation of personnel working with children, and a consultative paper was expected in early February which subsequently would be reported to the Education Committee for consideration.

It was agreed to note the terms of the reports.

MANAGEMENT OF ABSENCE

4. The Depute Director of Education (Jennifer Wallace) reported that, in respect of the management of absence of teaching staff, Head Teachers had been fully advised of, and were complying with the provisions of Standard Circular 73 which had been circulated to Head Teachers; that the practice of the Department was to pursue a supportive approach to the management of absence with the emphasis being on facilitating staff returning to work; and that during the period October to December 1996 an absence rate of 4% was recorded for teaching staff within East Ayrshire.

The Depute Director also explained that the Department of Education and Department of Personnel were working together to ensure a corporate approach to managing absences within East Ayrshire Council and, in fact, many of the Council's practices and proposals in this regard were contained within Standard Circular 73.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the Director of Education arrange to submit statistics on the rate of absence of East Ayrshire teaching staff to this Committee on a quarterly basis and that the information also be circulated to individual Head Teachers and Trade Unions; and
- (ii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PENSION SCHEMES

5. There was submitted a report dated 6 January 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Education advising of current arrangements for the payment of Teacher's pensions and outlining the proposed alterations to the Scottish Office Pensions Agency (SOPA) Regulations.

The Committee:-

- (i) expressed concern at the financial implications of the proposals for the Education Authority and the possible detrimental effects on the level and quality of teaching services; and
- (ii) otherwise, agreed to note the terms of the report, with the exception that the Committee, with reference to the comments made in Section 4.4 of the report, took the view that they did not concur with the proposal that a teacher under investigation for mis-conduct should not benefit from ill health retirement until a satisfactory conclusion has been reached.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: THE WAY AHEAD

6. There was submitted an Information Paper (circulated) prepared by the Director of Education entitled "Equal Opportunities in Action within the Education Department" on the promotion of Equal Opportunities within the Department of Education.

In this connection, the Depute Director of Education (Sue Angus) emphasised the importance of the application of equal opportunities in the Department, within the context of East Ayrshire Council's overall equal opportunities strategies; and referred to a Steering Group which had been established to examine relevant issues under this heading and to which two members of this Committee had been appointed. The first meeting of the Group would take place on 29 January 1997 and the main task of the Group, initially, would be to set out proposals for consideration by the Education Committee in respect of the adoption of an Equal Opportunities Strategy for the Department of Education and that this would be achieved through, essentially, examination and amendment of the Equal Opportunities Strategy pursued by the former Strathclyde Regional Council. It was envisaged that a report with recommendations on this matter would be prepared by the Steering Group for submission to the Education Committee within the next two to three months.

It was agreed:-

- (a) to note the terms of the report; and
- (b) to recommend approval of the Information Paper as submitted, subject to amendment of the final sentence under the heading "The Role of Establishments and Services", to include reference to "religion".

The meeting terminated at 1440 hours.