

# Perth & Kinross

## Local Agreements : School-Based Consultative Staff Mechanisms [ April 1997 ]

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PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 21 MAY 1997  
SCHOOL-BASED CONSULTATIVE STAFF MECHANISMS  
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

### ABSTRACT

This report provides information on the outcomes of the survey on the implementation of Guidelines on school-based consultative staff mechanisms and proposes that each school should establish a School Planning Consultative Group. This proposal takes forward the Council's objectives with regard to improving consultation mechanisms for staff in schools (Education Committee reports nos 96/490 and 97/144 refer).

### 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) notes the outcomes and conclusions of the survey on the implementation of Guidelines on school-based consultative staff mechanisms;
- ii) approves the proposal that each school will establish a School Planning Consultative Group as of the commencement of Session 1997/98 in accordance with the guidance presented in the attached appendix;
- iii) requires the Director of Education to report to the Committee on progress made with the implementation of this proposal in the Summer Term of Session 1997/98.

### 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Reports on "Promoting Achievement and Attainment for All; Partnerships, Participation and Consultation" (Reports nos 96/430 and 97/144 refer) have been approved by the Education Committee. The proposal contained in this report takes forward the objectives of the Council with regard to improving consultative mechanisms for staff in schools.

2.2 Guidelines on school-based consultative staff mechanisms were issued to schools in June 1994 by the Director of Education in Tayside Regional Council. The Guidelines were developed in Tayside by a JCC (Teachers) Sub-group on Teachers' Workload and were approved as policy by the Tayside Education Committee.

2.3 The Guidelines were developed as part of a package of proposals intended to address concerns regarding teachers' workload. The Tayside Education Committee also recognised the importance of promoting a management approach in schools which was genuinely collaborative and which would develop with staff a feeling of ownership. A crucial aspect of the guidelines was that each school should have an elected staff consultative group as a necessary component in the school planning process and in the effective monitoring of

workload.

2.4 A JCC (Teachers) Sub-group on Teachers' Workload was set up within Perth and Kinross Council and an immediate priority was established to review the implementation of the Guidelines on school-based consultative staff mechanism. To this end a survey was carried out between November 1996 and March 1997.

### 3 SURVEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 A questionnaire was sent to all schools in November 1996 and to professional teacher association representatives in each school. The questionnaire was then followed up by teams of two (one person from the Educational Development Service and one person from the teachers' side of the JCC) visiting a sample of schools to interview a variety of teaching and non-teaching staff. In all one nursery school, one special school, one primary department of a secondary school, nine primary schools and all ten secondary schools were visited.

3.2 The findings of the joint survey were as follows:

A significant number of schools have not adopted the existing Tayside guidelines.

Small schools tend to address workload issues informally through regular whole staff meetings.

At present workload mechanisms are usually confined to teachers although there is a growing acceptance that all staff should be involved where possible. There are practical difficulties in relation to different contract conditions.

Though there were some examples of good practice, few schools had written remits for consultative committees and in some instances staff were unclear about their purpose.

In some secondary schools there is a variety of committees and the number, the remits and responsibilities of these committees require to be reviewed to ensure effectiveness.

Primarily in secondary schools, there are no clear links between the different committees which have been established and only on occasions is there a proactive, effective reporting mechanism to all staff. In particular there does not seem to be a clear link between any consultative staff mechanism and that for school development planning.

There is a belief amongst staff in certain schools that the existing consultative mechanisms are ineffective and does not demonstrate any noticeable effect on managing workload.

A significant number of staff, particularly in secondary schools, are reluctant to participate, either because they believe that it will add to their existing workload and/or because they do not believe that the mechanism is effective.

3.3 The previous guidelines required all schools to establish a consultative staff group with the facility to elect members of this group. It then offered a variety of models for schools to consider as well as leaving the remit and composition of the group up to each school.

It is clear that in a significant number of schools the existing guidelines are neither being implemented nor being particularly effective where they are in existence.

The problems can be summarised as:

1 A lack of clarity about the remit for consultative staff mechanisms and their role vis a vis other committees, groups etc.

2 A belief by staff that such mechanisms do not really contribute to managing workload and that it is not worth participating in them.

3 No connection between the staff consultative mechanism and other school groups, in particular the school development planning mechanism.

#### 4 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed that each school should set up a School Planning Consultative Group. The planning process in schools should embrace all aspects of the work of the school including new developments and initiatives, ongoing maintenance and consolidation of work, resource and financial management, workload issues and staff support. This proposal to establish a School Planning Consultative Group would ensure that adequate consultation took place on all aspects of a school's work.

4.2 It is clearly acknowledged that it is the responsibility of school management to manage and deliver all aspects of service within the school planning process. However, it is also acknowledged that staff need to be informed and consulted about major issues which are likely to affect their work. The proposal to set up a School Planning Consultative Group in each school is intended to:

be a genuinely collaborative creative process representative of all staff in the school

encourage staff involvement in decision making at school level

result in a feeling of ownership and involvement for all staff

integrate all other school! processes including curriculum & staff development, staff review, DSM and workload management.

4.3 It is recommended that all schools establish a School Planning Consultative Group as of the commencement of Session 1997/98 with a remit, membership and operation as set out in the Appendix to this report. This single group would negate the need for other school based groups dealing with DSM, Workload and School Development Planning though sub-groups would be established to deal with specific aspects of school life.

4.4 It is proposed that the Director of Education be required to report to the Education Committee on the progress made with the implementation of this proposal in the Summer Term of Session 1997/988.

#### 5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no additional financial implications associated with this report at this time. Advice and training in the operation of the School Planning Consultative Group will be offered through the Educational Development Service and time for meetings will be found from within individual school's arrangements for INSET Days, Planned Activity Time and management time.

#### 6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Director of Law and Administration and the Joint Consultative Committee (Teachers) have been consulted on the contents of this report.

#### 7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The establishment of a School Planning Consultative Group in each school will ensure more effective management of the school planning process and encourage the full participation of staff in the life and work of the school.

BOB McKAY  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

For further information, contact Len McConnell ext 6213

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

#### APPENDIX

##### SCHOOL PLANNING CONSULTATIVE GROUP REMIT, MEMBERSHIP AND OPERATION

It is recommended that all schools establish a School Planning Consultative Group with a remit, membership and operation as set out below.

#### REMIT:

1. To oversee the creation of the draft School plan, in consultation with any other school group
2. To consider the human, material and financial resources and support available to take the school plan forward
3. To receive regular information about the progress of the plan throughout the year
4. To be consulted on any significant revisions to the plan and their financial and workload implications
5. To receive regular information about the general operation of the devolved school budget
6. To be consulted on any significant changes in relation to the devolved school budget, in particular the viring of money between budget heads and the carry forward of surpluses or deficits to the next financial year
7. To monitor the workload of all staff in the school and to consider workload issues arising from any other source
8. To consider any issues arising from any other whole school or departmental group that have implications for school planning, workload or devolved school management.

#### MEMBERSHIP

The composition of the School planning Consultative Group will be a minimum of

The Head Teacher

A Senior Management Team Member (where appropriate)

Elected teaching staff representatives according to the following ratio

Total Number of Teachers (excluding Head Teachers)	Number of Elected Teacher Representatives
1 - 5	Whole staff
6 - 19	3
20 - 39	4
40 - 59	5
60 - 79	6
80 - 99	7
100 - 119	8

**NOTE:** All levels of staff below Senior Teacher should be represented

Elected non-teaching staff representatives on the basis of

- one representative for schools with less than 600 pupils
- two representatives for schools with more than 600 pupils

It will be open to schools to exceed the minimum number of the group according to their own wishes and the circumstances of the school.

#### OPERATION

1. A written remit for the Group will be created through consultation with all staff. The remit and details of the Group's operational arrangements will be circulated to all staff
2. The Group will be elected on an annual basis, or exceptionally on a biennial basis by agreement at a whole staff meeting. Casual vacancies which occur within a year or two year period may be filled by a by-election or nomination from the group. In addition the consultative group can have the power to second members of staff to assist the consultative group or its sub groups in the work.
3. Arrangements will be mad at school level for teacher representatives to be elected by teaching members of staff and for non-teacher representative(s) to be elected by non-teaching members of staff
4. Schools will give consideration to the desirability of a balance between the different levels of teaching staff, as appropriate
5. The Planning Group should elect a chairperson from the elected membership
6. The Group will meet at least once per term. Additional meetings may be called by the Head Teacher or the Chairperson
7. Meetings of the Group will be minuted and the minutes circulated to all staff as well as decisions taken as a result of the group's discussions
8. The timing of meetings will be by agreement between the head teacher and other members of the group at suitable times of the normal school day/week including PAT time, IST time and without prejudice to minimum non-contact time.
9. The Head Teacher will ensure that the group is consulted and receives regular information as per its remit
10. According to their size and individual circumstances schools may decide to set up sub groups of the Planning Group to address specific issues or else add other remits such as Staff Review, Curriculum and Staff

Development etc. Any such groups should have clear written remits which are circulated to all staff. In large schools sub groups will be necessary in order for the consultative mechanism to operate effectively.

11. The relationship between the Planning Group, any sub-groups and all other whole school groups including the Senior Management Team will be made explicit and circulated to all staff

12. Arrangements should be made to ensure that new staff are made aware of the remits of all groups.

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