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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Lifelong Learning Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 March 2009</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director, Education &amp; Social Care</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUC/25/09/CR</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Chris Robertson</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712850</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>More efficient timetables in secondary schools</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide an explanation to elected members as to how savings will be achieved from August 2009 by reconfiguring secondary school timetables to make more efficient use of available teaching time. The saving associated with more efficient timetables in secondary schools was accepted by the Council at its meeting on 12 February 2009.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Currently most secondary schools operate a timetable composed of 30 lessons, or periods, in the pupil week, which is 27.5 hours.
- 2.2 Teachers are contractually entitled to 5 hours of non contact time during the pupil week. Each lesson is 50 or 55 minutes, therefore 6 periods are required to achieve teachers' entitlement of non contact. 6 periods expressed in hours and minutes is always over 5 hours and can be as much as 5 hours 30 minutes, leading to an inefficiency of up to 30 minutes per teacher per week.
- 2.3 A reconfiguration of secondary school timetables to 33 periods in the week gives periods of exactly 50 minutes. This means that teachers can be given 6 periods of non contact, which is exactly 5 hours. They will therefore teach up to 27 lessons in the week instead of 24.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the implications of the change in secondary school timetabling.

**Ian Fraser**  
**Corporate Director, Education & Social Care**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 In session 2006 – 2007 the Corporate Director Education and Social Care wrote to all secondary school teachers indicating that he would like to move to a 33 period week.

### 4.2 Advantages of a 33 period week

- A 33 period week would maximise the staffing resources of the service. As well as the extra time created within the pupil day (as outlined in 2.3 above), teachers would be available to teach more classes.
- Some educational benefits were identified:
  - The extra periods could be used to provide additional physical activity for young people. The government guidelines are that young people should receive at least two hours of high quality physical education a week: two 50/55 minute periods does not provide this. It has been very difficult within a 30 period week to find the time and space out of other areas of the curriculum to give additional PE.
  - More periods, with more staff available, would increase flexibility for the timetabler, with the likelihood that a reduction could be achieved in the number of classes that had to be split between two teachers.
  - More time would be created within the pupil day for teachers to meet together.
  - In the senior school, the extra periods could be used to give additional time to courses, with a consequent likely positive effect upon attainment. The current system allows for:

<i>English</i>	<i>Maths</i>	<i>Subject 3</i>	<i>Subject 4</i>	<i>Subject 5</i>	<i>PSE/RE/PE</i>	<i>Total</i>
6 periods	6 periods	5 periods	5 periods	5 periods	3 periods	30

There are historical reasons for this: English and mathematics, in the past, had more hours in their courses. However since the introduction of national courses in S5 and S6, all subjects' courses have been the same length, and extra periods in the pupil day gives an opportunity to redress the balance:

<i>English</i>	<i>Maths</i>	<i>Subject 3</i>	<i>Subject 4</i>	<i>Subject 5</i>	<i>PSE/RE/PE</i>	<i>Total</i>
6 periods	6 periods	6 periods	6 periods	6 periods	3 periods	33

### 4.3 Disadvantages of a 33 period week

- Different days of the week would have to be different lengths. This was felt to be potentially awkward for teachers, learners, parents and carers.
- Three days of the week would have 7 periods. A 3–period afternoon might offer difficulties to younger pupils, pupils with additional support needs and pupils who found it harder to concentrate. It was also recognised that a 3-period afternoon would be very demanding for teachers.
- In order to achieve a reasonable finishing time, the lunch 'hour' would have to be shortened. It was felt that this could have a detrimental effect upon the lunchtime activities and individual support for pupils that teachers commonly offer to pupils during lunchtimes.
- There could be an increase in teacher workload, as some would have to take additional classes.

4.4 During session 2007 – 2008 a working group met to consider the various options available. This group was chaired by the Leadership Development Officer (LDO) and was additionally composed of

- two secondary school head teachers
- two experienced secondary school timetablers
- a member of the schools estates team
- representatives from pupil support.

- 4.5.1 Prior to the first meeting of the group, the LDO visited schools in other education authorities that had already moved to a 33 period week, and also conducted a number of interviews on the telephone. She spoke to a range of head teachers, principal teachers, heads of service and officers from authority timetabling units. She also spoke to senior students in two schools. From one education authority a copy of a review of two sessions' experience of the system was available.
- 4.5.2 In Glasgow Council, all schools had been permitted to select their own variant of the revised system. Thus, some schools operated a model of 32 periods with registration, and all schools had different timings to the day and patterns of the week. It was not thought that this would be a suitable model for Inverclyde, since we have a strong tradition of cooperation among schools, and with James Watt College, to enable a wider curriculum choice for senior pupils. The teachers and head teachers that the LDO spoke to in Glasgow were broadly in favour of the change. Teachers appreciated having the extra time and space in the upper school to cover their crowded curriculum. They liked having a shorter day at certain points in the week, feeling that they could get more done at the end of the pupil day. Senior students also liked the extra time and preferred the new system in winter time, as it allowed them to return home before darkness on most days.
- 4.5.3 In East Ayrshire all schools had adopted 32 + registration. At the point of the investigation the system had been running only a few months, but there had been few problems.
- 4.5.4 East Renfrewshire Council had conducted a formal review of the system at the end of two sessions of operation. This wide-ranging review had sought the views of all stakeholders. The conclusions of the review, briefly, were as follows:
- the new system had supported curriculum innovation and change;
  - vocational provision had been enhanced;
  - the council had been able to refocus resources on *A Curriculum for Excellence* priorities;
  - there were signs that the extra time in the upper school was having a positive impact on attainment;
  - staffing resources were being used much more efficiently;
  - staff had appreciated the additional time available for continuous professional development at the end of 'short' days;
  - pupils' behaviour in the community at lunchtime was noticeably improved;
  - pupils and parents welcomed the extra investment in healthy lifestyles through an increase in physical education.
- 4.5.5 The LDO had in consequence been able to gather useful information about which models had worked well in other authorities, and also to discover what aspects ought to be avoided if at all possible. The views and information collected helped to form the ideas of the Inverclyde working group.
- 4.6 Recommendations from the working group were discussed by the senior management team in Education in June 2008 and by secondary head teachers in August 2008. They were then given out to all teachers, who were asked to comment by the end of October. All the secondary head teachers conducted an extensive consultation exercise with staff and students.
- 4.7 Responses received from teachers
- Teachers overwhelmingly opposed the introduction of the 33 period week. One school had 'no difficulty' with the principle, but was in a minority of one. The consultation responses showed little acceptance of the possible educational benefits of the proposal. A number of the negative responses dealt with issues to do with teachers: increased workload, stress etc. Most concerns, though, were about what effect the reconfiguration of the school day might have on the least advantaged, on extra curricular activities/supported study, and on school ethos. Schools who are preparing for decant into another building were particularly negative.
  - Although the reactions of teachers to the proposal are understandable, the Council had no choice but to go ahead in the current climate, given that there would be less impact on

teachers and on learning than other, less desirable, means of achieving savings. The Corporate Director wrote to teachers on 16 February 2009 acknowledging their concerns and explaining why the Council had to proceed with the change. A copy of his letter is attached as Appendix I.

- 4.8 The actual models and timing recommended by the working group also received a large number of comments from teachers. Each part of the consultation, and the eventual decision, is detailed below:

The position of registration time.

Inverclyde teachers were very keen to retain registration, and head teachers, too, favoured retention of this 10-minute slot at the beginning of the day. Inverclyde's very good attendance figures partly depend, it is felt, on intensive work by pupil support teachers first thing in the morning.

*It has therefore been decided to retain registration, at 10minutes each day (= 50 minutes), and move to a 32 period week + registration, which is the equivalent of 33 periods.*

The pattern of the week.

The recommendations of the working group were accepted by the large majority of teachers.

*Monday and Tuesday will be longer days with 7 periods each; Wednesday – Friday will be shorter, with 6 periods.*

The timings of each day

The working group had recommended that (a) 0850 should be the earliest possible start time; (b) lunchtime should be 40 minutes; (c) 'long' days had a different pattern from 'short' days, in order to keep each day's afternoon to only 2 periods. Generally speaking (a) was favourably received by teachers, whereas (b) and (c) were unpopular. It was decided as a compromise to concede the teachers' objections to (c) and to retain the working group recommendations at (b)

*Secondary schools will start at 0850.  
Lunch will be 40 minutes.  
Each day will have the same timings.*

The proposed timings of each day and pattern of the week are attached as Appendix II. (Circular 2.2 – *Alteration of School Hours* - applies where any changes in the timings of any school day are proposed. Under the terms of the circular head teachers are required to seek permission from the Corporate Director of Education and Social Care and to consult with parents, carers and young people. As the management of these changes is taking place from Education HQ, the requirements of the circular are being fulfilled centrally. The Corporate Director sent out a letter to families on 16 February seeking appropriate and relevant views by 3 April 2009. This letter is attached as Appendix III.)

The senior school timetable

A further consultation with school staff is currently taking place regarding where the extra periods now available to the upper school should be placed in the school week. Views from each secondary school will be brought to a head teachers' meeting to take place in mid March, at which a final decision will be made.

- 4.9 Schools will now analyse their own curriculum models, together with the staff and accommodation available to them, and decide where it would be most productive to place the extra 2 periods now available to schools in years 1 – 4. They have been asked to make P.E. a priority. It is likely that there will now be more scope for schools to introduce innovation in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*, and what best suits the needs of their own pupils.

## **5.0 FUTURE ACTIONS BY EDUCATION SERVICES**

5.1 Schools will now be supported in the following ways:

- A seminar for school timetablers will be held in March. Someone experienced in timetabling for a 33 period week will be on hand to assist them to arrive at realistic timetables for their schools.
- Liaison with cleaning and janitorial services, transport, catering and James Watt College will be managed centrally.
- Further curricular discussions will be held so that schools can share ideas about how to enrich their pupils' experience through the extra teacher time made available.
- The new system will be a standing item at the regular meetings between the Head of Schools and the teachers' unions. Any teething difficulties in relation to teachers' working time arrangements will be resolved in that forum.
- A number of features have been adopted on a trial basis. The whole new system will be reviewed in April/May 2010, and those aspects in particular will be debated once more.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The efficiency savings accruing to the Council are the salaries of seven teachers: 1 full time equivalent (FTE) teacher in each secondary school: approximately £280,000 for each complete school session.

## **7.0 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 In order to achieve a whole number of 1 FTE from each school, head teachers will require to declare one teacher surplus to requirements, for redeployment to another school.

## **8.0 EQUALITIES**

8.1 In order to find one whole teacher, instead of parts of teachers' timetables across the school, head teachers may have to - in the short term - restrict or expand some curriculum offerings artificially to maintain efficiency.

8.2 Each school will find its particular solution, taking into account the needs of its own specific circumstances.

## APPENDIX 1

Our ref: IF/LS  
Your ref:  
Date: 16 February 2009

**Education & Social Care**  
Corporate Director: Ian Fraser  
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**To all staff in Secondary Schools in  
Inverclyde**

Dear Colleague,

**Re: New timetables in session 2009 – 2010**

As you are aware, I asked for a consultation to take place in schools regarding the proposal that secondary schools would move to a 33 period week from August 2009 as an efficiency saving for the Council. The consultation, and recommendations from the working group, went out to you in September 2008 with a deadline of 31 October 2008. I would like to thank all staff who made their views known either to their head teacher or to their professional association. I would also like to thank head teachers for conducting such a thorough and wide-ranging consultation. Your views have been debated very carefully by elected members.

It is clear to me that teachers were overwhelmingly opposed to the proposed change: very few of you could see any clear advantage; most of you had concerns about teachers' workload and stress; many of you saw a potentially detrimental effect on the ethos of your schools and are worried about the possible negative impact on families. I sincerely believe that many of those fears are unfounded and that there are many educational advantages to the proposed change, as well as the benefits of the savings that would accrue to the Council. We are in a very difficult financial situation, as you are aware; the Council has been forced to make many tough choices among competing priorities – all absolutely deserving of support, but not all able to be supported. The reconfiguration of the secondary school day allows us to make efficiency savings without any reduction in service, and as such – despite your misgivings – is an attractive option for the Council in a time of financial constraints. The Council therefore decided to go ahead with the change in session 2009 – 2010. My main concerns must be to protect secure employment for teaching staff, and to minimise any diminution of service to our young people; the 33 period week delivers both these priorities. The system has settled down in education authorities which have already introduced it. I am certain that the same will be the case in Inverclyde.

In the very near future your head teacher will outline for you the implication of the changes for your school. I can assure you that many of the points that teachers made in the process of the consultation have been taken on board, and that some of the recommendations of the working group have been rejected in favour of your suggestions. I will now write to parents, carers and young people in line with Inverclyde Circular 2.2 and ask them to give me their views by 3 April 2009.

John Mundell, Chief Executive, has written to you outlining the further aspects of savings in teaching staff cover. It is considered that these changes can be assimilated without any changes to the staffing formula. We have also had to remove a significant number of posts in support staff to schools. There will also be savings in transport and significant savings in posts at the centre of education services. Given the scale of these changes, you can see why the 33 period week adjustment was attractive in the decisions that had to be made by elected members.

I know that I can have confidence in you to make this change work for the young people of Inverclyde.

Yours sincerely,



**Ian Fraser**  
Corporate Director Education & Social Care

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Timings of day and pattern of week**

<b>Monday and Tuesday</b>		<b>Wednesday - Friday</b>	
Reg.	8.50 – 9.00	Reg.	8.50 – 9.00
Period 1	9.00 – 9.50	Period 1	9.00 – 9.50
Period 2	9.50 – 10.40	Period 2	9.50 – 10.40
Break 15 minutes		Break 15 minutes	
Period 3	10.55 – 11.45	Period 3	10.55 – 11.45
Period 4	11.45 - 12.35	Period 4	11.45 - 12.35
Lunch 40 minutes		Lunch 40 minutes	
Period 5	1.15 – 2.05	Period 5	1.15 – 2.05
Period 6	2.05 – 2.55	Period 6	2.05 – 2.55
Period 7	2.55 - 3.45		

## APPENDIX III

Our ref: IF/LS  
Your ref:  
Date: 16 February 2009

**Education & Social Care**  
Corporate Director: Ian Fraser  
  
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**To parents / carers of pupils currently in:**

**P7 in primary schools  
S1 – S5 in secondary schools**

Dear Parent / Carer,

**Re: Introduction of new timetables in Inverclyde secondary schools**

Inverclyde Council will be implementing new timetables in all its secondary schools from August 2009. Currently all schools operate a 30 period week, with the addition of 10 minutes each day for registration. Each period lasts 50 or 55 minutes. From August, the week will be changing to 32 periods, each exactly 50 minutes in length, and retaining the registration slot. The length of the week for pupils will remain precisely the same, at 27.5 hours, but not every day in the week will be the same length.

### **Why are we introducing those changes?**

- The new structure provides maximum efficiency in teacher contact time. This creates savings for the Council.
- We believe that there will be an educational advantage to pupils by boosting the number of contacts they can have with teachers.
- Increasing the number of periods means that we can ensure equal time allocations for all subjects in S5 and S6.
- Opportunities are now given to improve PE provision.
- The change will help schools to find the flexibility necessary to address the challenges of *Curriculum for Excellence* (the new curricular programme currently being introduced in schools) and the interdisciplinary studies recommended by that programme.

### **What will the changes mean for young people and parents?**

- Two school days (Monday and Tuesday) will have 7 periods and three school days (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday) will have 6 periods.
- It means an earlier start for some schools.
- On Monday and Tuesday, the schools will finish later than at present; on Wednesday – Friday, they will finish earlier.
- There will be a slightly shorter lunch time in some schools.
- Transport and catering services will be adjusted to suit the new timings.

You and your son/daughter are very welcome to comment on the proposed new timings and pattern for the school week detailed in full on the attached sheet. You can do so

in writing, to Education Services – 105 Dalrymple Street, Greenock, PA15 1HT  
by email, to [educationconsultation.HO@inverclydeschools.org.uk](mailto:educationconsultation.HO@inverclydeschools.org.uk)

Responses should be made by **Friday 3 April 2009**.

I am confident that those changes will be to the benefit of the young people of Inverclyde.

Yours sincerely,



**Ian Fraser**  
**Corporate Director Education & Social Care**