



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Industrial action involving Belfast City Council employees on 30 November 2011.
Date:	18 November 2011
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Head of HR

Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that the Committee, at its meeting on 21 October 2011, was advised that the Trade Union Congress had voted unanimously in favour of industrial action over the government's proposals to increase employee pension contributions in the public sector pension scheme.

The Committee was also advised that during October the local government trade unions would ballot their members on industrial action.

The final results of the ballot were made known to the council on 17 November 2011 and the majority of those who took part in the ballot have voted in favour of strike action (NIPSA 67%; GMB 82%; Unite 87%; and SIPTU 81%).

As a result, strike action by Unite, NIPSA, GMB and SIPTU members is planned for **30 November 2011**.

Key Issues

The Industrial Action Contingency Group (IACG), chaired by the Head of HR, met on 9 November 2011. A further meeting of the group is scheduled for 24 November 2011.

To date the IACG has taken the following actions:

- Determined exemption requirements (i.e. those individuals or groups of staff who should remain in work during industrial action to minimise disruption of service provision, meet health and safety obligations, and provide business continuity in so far as it practicable). The Head of HR will meet with the Trade Union Coordinators on Monday 21 November 2011 to agree the final exemption

arrangements.

- Established contingency plans for each department to seek to ensure that service disruption is minimised as far as is reasonably practicable on the day of industrial action.
- Organised a central information centre (CIC) in the Emergency Control Centre (ECC), City Hall. The CIC will gather information throughout the day of industrial action from various council departmental reporting points on disruption to services; impact of attendance; location of pickets; media activity; and, council building status. Members will receive regular updates throughout the day of strike action.
- Put in place arrangements with Corporate Communications and individual key services to ensure the public is advised of potential service disruption and arrangements for services such as bin collection.

Prior to the date of industrial action:

- The Chief Executive will write to the Party Group Leaders advising of the contingency arrangements and contact details for the Head of HR and other senior managers. Members can contact the Head of HR directly to discuss any particular issue of significance in respect of the day of industrial action.
- HR will write to all staff regarding issues arising from the strike, such as deduction of pay and pension arrangements.

Resource Implications

Staff participating in the industrial action will not be paid for the day of the strike.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the information set out in this report. A further report will be provided to committee on the impact the day of industrial action had on the council.

Decision Tracking

Report to be made to committee in December 2011.

Key to Abbreviations

IACG - Council's Industrial Action Contingency Group.
CIC - Central Information Centre
ECC – Emergency Control Centre

Documents Attached

None