



MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE ON TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 6.30 PM

- In the Chair:** Councillor P Dunlop
- Members Present:** Alderman – F Agnew
Councillors – S Flanagan, P Hamill, N Kelly, V McAuley, N McClelland, M Magill, V Robinson, B Webb and R Wilson
- In Attendance:** Councillor A Bennington
- Officers Present:** Director of Finance & Governance – S Cole
Director of Organisation Development – A McCooke
Head of Legal Services and Borough Lawyer – P Casey
Head of Finance – J Balmer
ICT Officer – C Bell
Member Services Officer – S Boyd

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the November Meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee and reminded all present of recording requirements.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Robinson to the Council and his first Policy and Governance Committee.

1. APOLOGIES

Alderman Kinahan

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 3.1 - Councillor Wilson
Item 5.1 - Councillor Kelly

3. PRESENTATION

3.1 G/MSMO/007/V15 NORTHERN IRELAND COMMITTEE OF THE IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

Members were reminded that in March 2019, it was agreed that the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress Trade Unions (NIC-ICTU), be invited to make a presentation to the Policy and Governance Committee.

Owen Reidy, Assistant General Secretary, Irish Congress of Trade Unions Northern Ireland Committee, made the presentation and provided Members with an overview on their campaign *Better Work Better Lives*.

4. ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 CE/OA/034 BUSINESS RATES PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Members were aware the Department of Finance is undertaking a review of Business Rates. In advance of the Council's formal response to the public consultation, Alan Bronte, Director of Rating Policy, held a briefing session on the 3rd October 2019 which allowed Elected Members to consider the current rating system and options for improvements.

A draft response to the consultation was circulated for Members consideration. The consultation period closes on 11 November.

Officers responded to a number of Members' queries in relation to the draft response.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and agreed that

the draft response be approved.

ACTION BY: John Balmer, Head of Finance

Councillor Hamill left the Chamber.

4.2 G/LEG/291-25 SOCIETY LOTTERY APPLICATION – RANDALSTOWN RFC

An application from Randalstown Rugby Football Club to hold a Society Lottery at the premises of the Ulster Branch of Irish Rugby Football Union, Kingspan Stadium, Belfast on 2 December 2019 had been received. This lottery is part of the Irish Rugby Football Union's 'Your Club, Your Country' initiative and the purpose of the lottery is to support club development.

The application meets all statutory requirements and PSNI have no objections.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

the issuing of a licence for the lottery for Randalstown Rugby Football Club be approved.

ACTION BY: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

4.3 G/LEG/291-28 SOCIETY LOTTERY APPLICATION – ST MACNISSI'S

An application from St MacNissi's Parent Association to hold a Society Lottery at St MacNissi's Primary School, Newtownabbey on the 13 December 2019 has been received. The proceeds of the lottery will go for school supplies.

The application has been sent to the PSNI to seek their views.

Proposed by Councillor McClelland
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

subject to the PSNI having no objection the issuing of a licence for the lottery for St MacNissi's Parent Association be approved.

ACTION BY: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

Councillor Hamill returned to the Chamber.

4.4 G/MSMO/21 THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILLORS UK

Members were advised that correspondence had been received from the National Association of Councillors UK (circulated) advising that the Addressing Family Poverty/Children's Services & National AGM would take place from 22-24 November 2019 in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Chester. The delegate fee for the Conference is £350 plus VAT and accommodation is available at the conference hotel at £60 plus VAT per night.

Members are advised that this conference is not usually attended.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor Magill and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.5 FI/FIN/041 LAND AND PROPERTY SERVICES REVALUATION 2020 – PRESENTATION TO COMMITTEE

Land and Property Services (LPS) have requested to brief Members on 'Revaluation 2020', the revaluation of non-domestic properties to come into effect from 1st April 2020.

The presentation would follow after the publication of the draft values on 26th November 2019. A fact sheet from Land and Property Services was circulated for Members information. Potential suitable dates were advised as 3rd December 2019 P&G or 7th January P&G 2020.

Proposed by Councillor Hamill
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and agreed that

that Land and Property Services (LPS) be invited to present to the Policy and Governance Committee in January 2020.

ACTION BY: John Balmer, Head of Finance/Member Services

4.6 HR/LD/005 BREASTFEEDING WELCOME HERE POLICY

Background

Northern Ireland's 10 year Strategy "**Breastfeeding - A Great Start**" 2013-2023" was published in June 2013. The purpose of the Strategy is to improve the health and well-being of mothers and babies in Northern Ireland through breastfeeding. It sets out the strategic direction to protect, promote, support and normalise breastfeeding in Northern Ireland.

Breastfeeding promotes health, prevents disease and helps contribute to reducing health inequalities. Breastfeeding is accepted by the World Health Organisation as the optimal method for infant feeding. It provides the foundation for a healthy start in life and prevents disease in the short and long term for both babies and their mothers.

Breastfeeding rates in Northern Ireland are the lowest in the United Kingdom and the strategy aims to protect, promote, support and normalise breastfeeding so that women are able to make informed decisions and are supported to breastfeed.

There are four outcomes in the strategy with a series of actions under each Outcome. One of the actions under Outcome 1- Supportive environments for breastfeeding exist throughout Northern Ireland is to promote and further rollout "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" to extend the membership to more businesses and public facilities.

Research has shown that one of the reasons women choose not to breastfeed or stop breastfeeding early is the lack of appropriate places/facilities to breastfeed in public areas.

The Breastfeeding Welcome Here scheme is an initiative that makes it easier for families to recognise places where they can breastfeed their baby when they are out and about.

Breastfeeding Welcome Here Policy

To establish supportive environments for breastfeeding, a Breastfeeding Welcome Here policy has been developed and was circulated - Appendix 1 for Members' consideration. The policy seeks to ensure that all Antrim and Newtownabbey Council premises (public areas and venues) provide a welcoming atmosphere for mothers who wish to breastfeed.

If approved, the Council would commit to a number of practical steps in order to achieve the policy aim, and these are noted as follows:-

- Provide training for Council staff and Members
- Will sign a written agreement (for each of its premises) that states Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council will adhere to the Breastfeeding Welcome Here Membership Criteria.
- Register the Council premises with the Breastfeeding Welcome Here Scheme.
- Actively promote the Breastfeeding Welcome Here Scheme through a variety of platforms including social media, press releases and the Council website.

The business case and related screening forms have been prepared in relation to the introduction of this policy and was circulated - Appendix 2.

The desired policy outcome is that breastfeeding families will feel welcome on all Council premises, and to this end staff within Environmental Health and Human Resources will work to implement the policy.

Importantly, the policy supports key health and wellbeing outcomes anchored within the Council's Corporate and Community plans, which seeks to ensure that our staff and citizens enjoy good health and wellbeing.

Members commended Officers on producing the comprehensive Policy.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley

Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed that

the Breastfeeding Welcome Here Policy be approved and that Appendix A, which refers to the internal staff protocol, be circulated to Members.

ACTION BY: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

4.7 HR/HR/026 LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRAINING GROUP – FEES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2019/2020

Members were reminded that the functions of the Local Government Training Group (LGTG) are still being managed by the Board of the LGTG and administered by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council up to 31 December 2020.

A full review of the needs for learning and development within local Government will be undertaken this year on behalf of and involving the 11

Councils. The review will give direction for future needs, structures and contributions from 2020 forward.

A Service Level Agreement for the period 2019/2020 is in place and the membership fees for 2019/2020 for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council remain at £16,122 as calculated by the LGTG Board. This is based on the Council's percentage rateable value in relation to all rate payers across Northern Ireland and applied to the total amount agreed to run the LGTG up to March 2020. There is budgetary provision for the LGTG services.

Proposed by Councillor Flanagan
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

a payment of £16,122 be made to Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council in respect of the fees for the Local Government Training Group for 2019/2020.

ACTION BY: Fiona Gunning, Organisation Development Officer

4.8 G/MSMO/018 NILGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Members were advised that correspondence (circulated) has been received in relation to the 2020 NILGA Annual Conference, Exhibition and Gala Awards Dinner.

The event will be held on the 20th February 2020 in the Crown Plaza Hotel Belfast. The theme for this year's event is "The Future of Local Government". Two free places to each Council are being offered with additional places being charged at £99 plus VAT for conference only, conference and awards dinner £145 plus VAT and Local Government Awards Dinner £60 plus VAT.

In 2018 the Conference was held in the Armagh City Hotel and Members resolved that the Council's NILGA representatives attend the Conference and Awards dinner, including an overnight stay with breakfast.

It is anticipated that, as in previous years, NILGA will allocate a free place for the Mayor and an Officer to attend the event.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Alderman Agnew and agreed that

in line with the arrangements last year, Council's NILGA representatives attend the event as an approved duty.

ACTION BY: Member Services

4.9 G/LEG/321 DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Members were advised that correspondence had been received from the Department for Infrastructure asking for Members' comments regarding a proposed one way traffic system in Ballynure.

The one way system will run from the junction of Carrickfergus Road and Main Street to Main Streets junction with the Belfast Road in a clockwise direction.

A copy of the letter and proposal was circulated for Members' information.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and agreed that

the proposal be approved.

ACTION BY: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

The Chairperson advised that the following Supplementary report would be taken at this point.

4.10 G/LEG/291-23 SOCIETY LOTTERY APPLICATION ACADEMY RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB, MALLUSK

An application from Academy Rugby Football Club, Mallusk to hold a Society Lottery at the premises of the Ulster Branch of Irish Rugby Football Union, Kingspan Stadium, Belfast on 2 December 2019 has been received. This lottery is part of the Irish Rugby Football Union's 'Your Club, Your Country' initiative and the purpose of the lottery is to support the running costs of Academy Rugby Football Club.

The application meets all statutory requirements and PSNI have no objections.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and agreed that

the issuing of a licence for the lottery for Academy Rugby Football Club be approved.

ACTION BY: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

Councillor Kelly left the Chamber having declared an interest in Item 5.1.

5. ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 G/GEN/016 THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING NORTHERN IRELAND

Members were advised that correspondence (circulated) had been received from the Royal College of Nursing Northern Ireland in relation to balloting members employed within the HSC in Northern Ireland for industrial action up to and including strike action.

It has been highlighted that the five Health and Social Trusts in Northern Ireland now sit with over 3000 unfilled nursing posts, which equates to 13% of the total nursing workforce and also is the highest in the UK.

Nurses have reported serious concerns that there are not enough staff to provide safe and effective care for patients. The RCN believes that the current nursing workforce crisis is having an impact upon the health and well-being of the people of Northern Ireland due to longer waiting lists and cancelled operations.

The RCN has highlighted there is a clear linkage between cost-saving measures, inadequate workforce planning, pay disparity and the recruitment and retention of staff. As a result, the RCH (UK) Council has now authorised the RCN in Northern Ireland to ballot members employed within the HSC in Northern Ireland for Industrial action up to and including strike action.

Councillor McAuley requested that her support for nursing staff in relation to the industrial action be noted. The Chairperson also commended the work carried out by both nurses and doctors.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the Mayor, Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Policy and Governance Committee attend a meeting with the Royal College of Nursing, and that a letter be written to the Secretary of State to highlight the issues.

ACTION BY: Laura Campbell, PA to Director of Organisation Development

Councillor Kelly returned to the Chamber.

5.2 CE/OA/005 LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLITICAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM

Members were advised the next meeting of the Local Government Political Partnership Forum will take place on the 31 January 2020.

Council have the opportunity to raise strategic issues, of regional significance for discussion at this Forum that are not being furthered through other avenues.

Should Council wish to raise issues this can be done by providing comments for collation and submission to NILGA in the required format circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

strategic issues for future discussion by the Forum be provided to Member Services for collation and submission to NILGA in the required format.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and it was agreed

that Officers explore the possibility of increasing Membership to this Forum, for Elected Members, as currently only one Elected Member can be nominated by each Council.

ACTION BY: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance

5.3 FC/FA/8 MID-YEAR REVIEW OF PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS & TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Members were reminded that the Council approved the Prudential Indicators for 2019/2020 to 2021/2022 and the Treasury Management Strategies for 2019/20 on 28 January 2019.

Under the Prudential Code and the Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services the Council is required to monitor and review its prudential indicators. The key objective of which is to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the Council are affordable, prudent and sustainable and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice.

The Council's Treasury Management Policy requires a mid - year review of treasury management activities.

This report provides an update on the Prudential Indicators and a mid-year review of the Council's borrowing and investment activities. A copy of the report was circulated for Members' information.

Proposed by Councillor Flanagan
Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

*Alderman Agnew and Councillor Kelly left the meeting.
Councillor McAuley left the Chamber.*

5.4 FI/FIN/9 PROMPT PAYMENT PERFORMANCE

Members were reminded the Department for Communities (DfC) issued revised guidance (Local Government Circular 19/2016) on prompt payments and the recording of invoice payments in November 2016. This guidance requested councils to record specific performance targets of 10 working days and 30 calendar days and continue a cycle of quarterly reporting on prompt payment performance by councils to the DfC and its publication on their website.

The Council's prompt payment performance for the period **1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019** is set out below:

The default target for paying invoices, where no other terms are agreed, is 30 days.

(N.B. 30 days target is 30 calendar days and 10 days is 10 working days).

During the above period, the Council paid 6,342 invoices totalling £16,971,448.

The Council paid 5,281 invoices within the 30 day target. (83%)

The Council paid 4,189 invoices within the 10 day target. (66%)

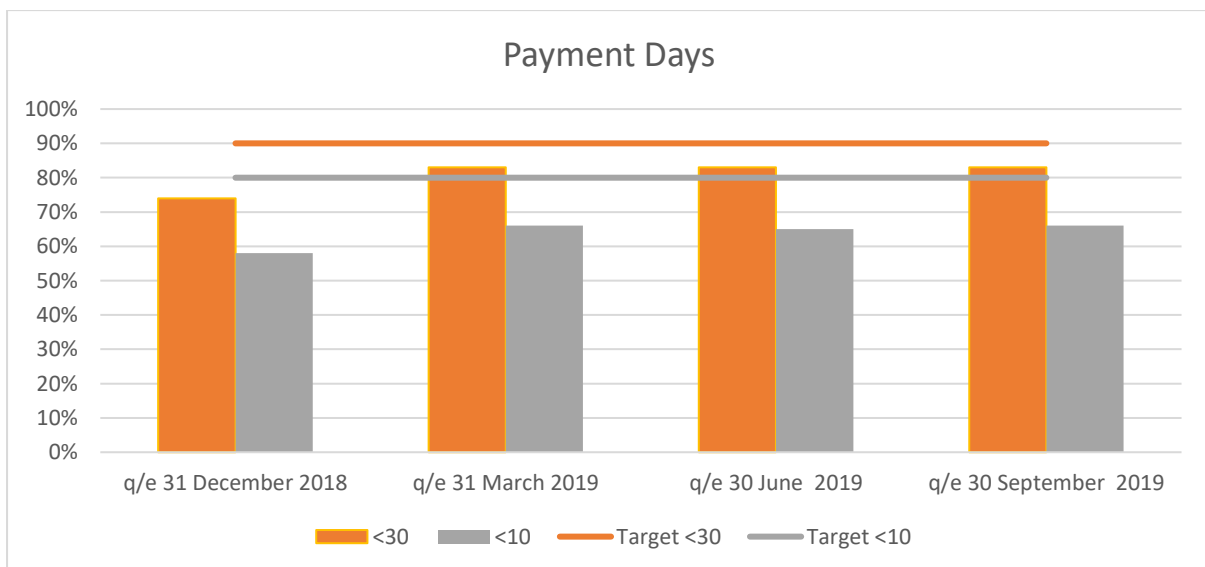
The Council 1,061 paid invoices outside of the 30 day target. (17%)

The Council has set a target of paying 90% of invoices within 30 days and 80% within 10 days.

The quarterly results from 1 October 2018 to date were as follows:

Period	Total Number of Invoices Paid	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Target		90%	80%
q/e 31 Dec 2018	7,641	74%	58%
q/e 31 March 2019	7,413	83%	66%
q/e 30 June 2019	6,680	83%	65%
q/e 30 Sept 2019	6,342	83%	66%

The performance presented graphically highlights the performance metrics for the above.



Performance for quarter 1 and 2 of 2019/20 are similar for both the 30 day and 10 day targets.

We will continue to strive to achieve the 30 day target and further improve the 10 day performance whilst maintaining a high level of good governance and internal control in relation to supplier payments.

The prompt payment performance for Councils in Northern Ireland is published quarterly by the Department for Communities (DfC). The prompt payment performance for the quarter ended 30 June 2019 is shown in **Appendix 1** (circulated); the Council's performance against the average performance for the other Councils for the first quarter of 2019/20 is set out in the table below:

Council	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Antrim & Newtownabbey BC	83%	65%
All Councils	88%	55%

Proposed by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

Councillor McAuley returned to the Chamber.

5.5 CCS/EDP/14 RURAL NEEDS ACT (NI) 2016 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Members were reminded that on 1 June 2017, the Rural Needs Act became operational for district councils and government departments.

The Rural Needs Act places a duty on public authorities and local councils, to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies, plans and when designing and delivering public services. It also requires public authorities to provide information to Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on how they have fulfilled this duty on an annual basis and to collate this information in their annual report.

The Rural Needs Annual Monitoring report for 2018 to 2019 was circulated (Appendix 1) for Members' information.

Proposed by Councillor Magill
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.6 CCS/EDP/7 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT, EQUALITY COMMISSION

Members were reminded that Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to have due regard for the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation, men and women generally, persons with a disability and persons without and persons with dependants and persons without.

The Council's Equality Scheme describes certain arrangements that as a public authority, the Council has set-up and is obliged to apply and follow as a means of fulfilling the duties imposed on it by Section 75(1) and (2) (i.e. the duties to have regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations).

This includes arrangements for training staff, assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity, and monitoring any adverse impact of those policies that have been adopted.

The Council must provide an Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission and outline how those arrangements have been applied and to assess how effective they have been in supporting the Council to comply with the Section 75 duties.

The progress report for 2018 to 2019 was circulated (Appendix 1) for Members' information.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.7 HR/HR/019 AGENCY UPDATE

Members were reminded that agency staff are used across the Council to provide temporary cover for absence such as:

- Maternity leave
- Secondments
- Sickness absence
- Vacant posts

The use of agency staff is subject to a rigorous approval process, which requires the approval of the Corporate Leadership Team and there is budgetary provision for the majority of posts filled via departmental salary budgets, salary contingency and grant funding.

The table (circulated) at Appendix 1 provides an update for Members on the use of agency staff as at September 2019 compared to September 2018. It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice.

The expenditure on agency workers in September 2019 was circulated (Appendix 2).

The cost of agency staff has increased for the period of 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019 at 7% of all staffing costs compared to 6.06% for the same period last year. These increase substantively relates to the pay increase and increase in Employers pension contributions effective from April 2019, and the earlier starting date required for parks seasonal staff this year.

Proposed by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.8 HR/HR/10 NILGA REGIONAL PAY BRIEFING

Members were advised that NILGA held a regional pay briefing to be held on 10 September 2019 regarding the NJC pay claim for 2020.

The trade unions have lodged a claim for a one-year agreement which includes:

- A "real living wage" of £10 per hour for those at the bottom of the pay scales and a 10% increase on all other pay points
- A one-day increase to the minimum paid annual leave entitlement (minimum is currently 21 days per annum)
- A two-hour reduction in the standard working week

At the pay briefing the view was that due to the level of the claim there may be protracted negotiations and it may not be possible to reach agreement until the summer or autumn of 2020.

Based on the pay briefing it is more likely that agreement will be reached for an increase of between 2% and 3% (given that teachers have been awarded 2.75%) and provision has been made in the 2020/21 budgets to reflect this.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Flanagan
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and agreed that

the following Committee business be taken In Confidence.

The Chairperson advised that audio recording would now cease.

6. ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 IN CONFIDENCE HR/GEN/004 CHRISTMAS EVE 2019

Members were reminded that in line with the requirements of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE), employees from the former Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Councils and the former Northern Ireland Civil Service Planning Department, transferred to the new Council on 1 April 2015.

Members were advised that the purpose of TUPE was to protect employees if the organisation in which they were employed changes hands. Its effect was to transfer employees and any liabilities associated with them, from the old employer to the new employer by operation of law.

To this end, all employees from the former Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Councils and the former Northern Ireland Civil Service Planning Department, had transferred to the new Council in accordance with their existing terms and conditions, in line with our legal obligations.

Historically, legacy Newtownabbey Borough Council had a half day for Christmas Eve. When Christmas Eve was on a Saturday or Sunday, the half day was taken on the preceding Friday. Where it was not possible to close the service early, a half day leave in lieu was awarded, to be taken by agreement at a later date.

Since 2015, Members approved the half day Christmas Eve for all staff as a goodwill gesture and Members may wish to consider granting a half day Christmas Eve this year as a further goodwill gesture for the continued staff achievements.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor McClelland and agreed that

all staff be granted a half day for Christmas Eve as a goodwill gesture.

ACTION BY: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Flanagan
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and agreed that

the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further committee business the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting concluded at 7.45 pm.

MAYOR