



MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD AT MOSSLEY MILL ON TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 6.30 PM

In the Chair: Councillor T McGrann

Members Present: Councillors – M Cooper, H Cushinan, R Foster, S Flanagan, N Kelly, A McAuley, M Magill, B Mallon, N Ramsay, V Robinson, M Stewart, B Webb and R Wilson

Non Committee Members: Councillors – A Bennington, N McClelland and V McWilliam

Officers Present: Deputy Chief Executive of Finance & Governance – S Cole
Director of Organisation Development – D Rogers
Head of Governance – L Johnston
Head of Finance – R Murray
Projects Development Manager – C Minnis
ICT Systems Support Officer – C Bell
Member Services Officer – S Boyd

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson, Councillor McGrann, welcomed everyone to the February Meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee, and reminded all present of recording requirements.

In order to protect public health during the current COVID-19 emergency it was not possible to allow the public or the press to physically attend the meeting. The public and the press can access those parts of the meeting which they are entitled to attend via livestream (a link to which is on the Council website). The meeting minutes and audio recording would be published on the Council's website.

1. APOLOGIES

Alderman Michael

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3. PRESENTATION

3.1 PRESENTATION – ICT SUPPORTING CORPORATE RECOVERY

The Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance advised Members that the presentation had been deferred to a future meeting of the Policy & Governance Committee.

4. ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 FC/G/002 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

Members were advised that Ms Gill Cubitt had recently been appointed as Financial Performance Officer within the Finance & Governance department.

It is a requirement of the financial institutions used by Council to formally minute the authorisation given by Council to named officers to transact financial business on the Council's behalf.

Proposed by Councillor Webb

Seconded by Councillor Robinson and agreed

that Ms Gill Cubitt, Financial Performance Officer be authorised:

- a) As a signatory to the Council's bank accounts;**
- b) To submit and approve internet banking transactions;**
- c) To submit and approve Bankers' Automated Clearing Services (BACS) transactions;**
- d) Transact business with Council approved counterparty institutions**

ACTION BY: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

The Chairperson took the Supplementary report at this point of the meeting.

4.2 G/MSMO/031 – CHANGES IN ARRANGMENTS FOR MEETINGS ADJACENT TO PLATINUM JUBILEE BANK HOLIDAY

As Members were aware this year's Annual Meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 1 June. The four-day Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, immediately follows this from Thursday 2 June to Sunday 5 June. This presents a challenge in terms of arrangements, circulation of positions and training of members that normally occur after the annual meeting as the first meetings of the newly constituted Operation and Policy and Governance Committees would normally be scheduled for Monday 6 June and Tuesday 7 June respectively.

On the days immediately following the Annual Meeting there is a significant amount of organisation required regarding the appointment of new Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and establishing new Committees and Working Groups. Also, it is anticipated this year there will be a full calendar of events planned for

both the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee immediately following the Annual Meeting over the Bank Holiday weekend.

Due to the proximity of the public holiday dates to both the Annual Meeting and the Operations and Policy and Governance Committee, the following changes are proposed to ensure appropriate organisation of the Mayor's Office and Council's democratic services during this period:

1. The new Mayor and Deputy Mayor briefing meetings, which normally take place the day after the Annual Meeting, be brought forward and organised for the morning of the Annual Meeting, 1 June. This will facilitate briefing on duties and organisation of travel arrangements/timings for events over the bank holiday weekend etc. This time will also be used to brief the new Mayor on Chairing of the Annual Meeting;

The Operations and Policy and Governance Committee be moved to Tuesday, 14 June and Wednesday, 15 June to permit timely issue of invites, agendas and papers to Members. This will also allow training to be organised for all new Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees, as necessary, in advance of meetings commencing after the Annual Meeting. Dates of the other Committees in June will remain unchanged.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed that

- 1. the briefings for the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor be brought forward to the week before the Annual Meeting in preparation for the Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday Weekend;**
- 2. The Operations and Policy and Governance Committees be moved to the Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15 June respectively.**

ACTION BY: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance/Member Services

5 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 FI/FIN/9 PROMPT PAYMENT PERFORMANCE

Members were reminded that 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 October 2021 to 31 December 2021** 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 invoices totalling £11,407,946.

The Council paid 5,770 invoices within the 30-day target. (88%)

The Council paid 5,042 invoices within the 10-day target. (77%)

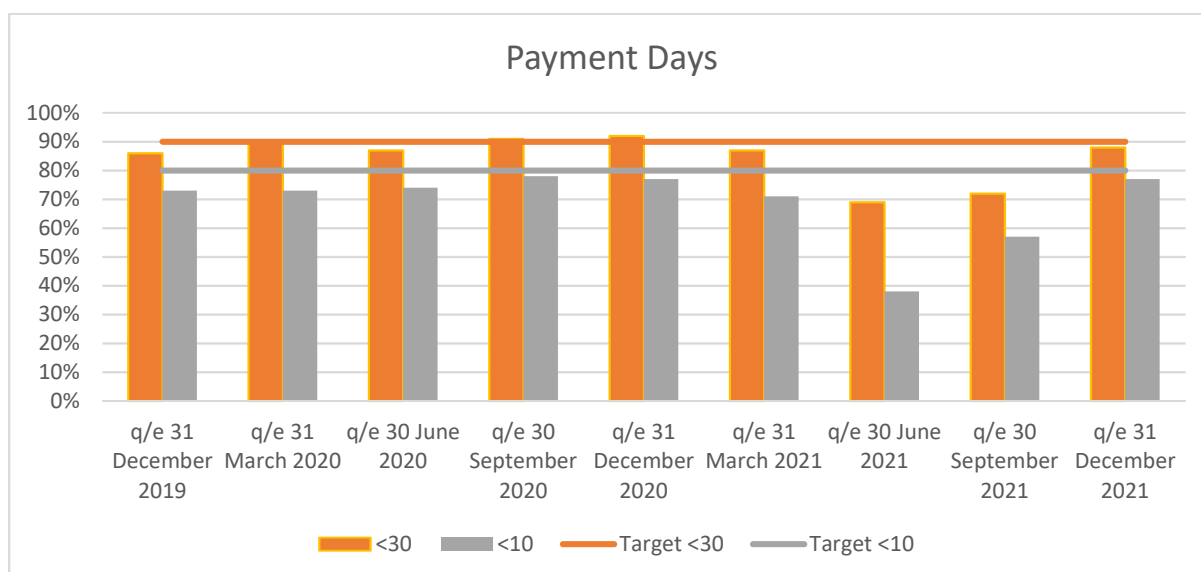
The Council paid 805 invoices outside of the 30-day target. (12%)

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

The quarterly results from q/e March 2021 to date are as follows:

Period	Total Number of Invoices Paid	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Target		90%	80%
q/e 31 March 2021	4,611	87%	71%
q/e 30 June 2021	3,352	69%	38%
q/e 30 September 2021	5,867	72%	57%
q/e 31 December 2021	6,575	88%	77%

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



Members recalled that a new finance system went 'live' on 12 April 2021. This impacted on performance whilst the new system and procedures were embedded.

The table and graph above showed the performance improvement over the last three quarters, with performance levels now exceeding that for quarter 4 of 2020/21.

This improvement has been sustained into the last quarter of 2021/22 as shown in the table below.

It is worth noting that the number of invoices paid for quarter 3; 6,575, have almost returned to pre-Covid levels; q/e 31 December 2019, 7,240 invoices paid.

Period	Total Number of Invoices Paid	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Quarter 1			
Apr	470	83%	49%
May	1,068	66%	28%
June	1,814	64%	33%
Quarter 2			
July	1,895	58%	42%
Aug	1,911	60%	58%
Sept	2,061	85%	69%
Quarter 3			
Oct	2,300	85%	73%
Nov	2,429	90%	79%
Dec	1,846	87%	76%
Quarter 4			
1 Jan – 26 Jan	1,281	90%	79%

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 September 2021 is shown in **Appendix 1** (circulated); the Council's performance for Quarter 2 against the average performance for the other Councils for the same Quarter of 2021/22 is set out in the table below:

Council	% Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 10 Days
Antrim & Newtownabbey BC (2nd Quarter 2021/22)	72%	57%
All Councils (2nd Quarter 2021/22)	90%	63%

Following a question from a Member the Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance provided clarity on performance levels, which had improved since the implementation of the new finance system, and that the new system was proving beneficial in meeting prompt payment targets.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.2 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – DECEMBER 2021 – PERIOD 9

A budget report for December 2021 – Period 9 was circulated for Members' information.

The Council's financial position at the end of December 2021 shows a favourable variance of £1.34m.

Should the favourable position continue until the end of the financial year, contributions may be made to Reserves to offset future operational or rates losses, or for Borough Recovery and Strategic Projects.

Proposed by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Councillor Ramsay and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.3 G/MSMO/27 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Members were advised that a meeting of the Member Development Working Group took place on Monday 10 January 2022 and a copy of the minutes was circulated for Members' information.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor Ramsay and agreed

that the Minutes of the Member Development Working Group Meeting held on Monday 10 January 2022 be noted.

NO ACTION

5.4 CE/OA/035 NEXT STEPS IN THE 2023 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

Correspondence has been received from the Boundaries Commission NI (BCNI) advising that, in line with their statutory duties, BCNI have published on their website the representations received during the initial consultation period, taking place ahead of the launch of the secondary six-week

consultation on 9 February 2022.

The representations and Guide to the Secondary Consultation are available at: <https://www.boundarycommission.org.uk/2023-review-parliamentary-constituencies>

The Commission has advised that the secondary consultation period will provide an opportunity to submit further written representations with respect to the representations from the initial consultation period, which have been published. The secondary consultation period will also include a number of public hearings, at which oral representations can be made about any of the Commission's initial proposals, and about any counterproposals.

More details about the hearings would be published on the Commission's website on 9 February 2022.

Proposed by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Councillor Magill and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.5 CCS/EDP/7 QUARTERLY SCREENING REPORT AND RURAL SCREENING

Members were advised that in line with the Council's Equality Scheme it was agreed to provide quarterly updates on the screening of policies under Section 75. Within the Scheme, the Council gave a commitment to apply screening methodology to all new and revised policies. Where necessary and appropriate, these new policies would be subject to further equality impact assessment.

SECTION 75 AND RURAL SCREENINGS

The policies noted below have been screened between October to December 2021.

POLICY	SCREENING DECISION
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Programme	1
Smoke and Vape Policy	1
PCSP Disability Action Plan 2022	1
Draft Dual Language Street Signs Policy	1

- (1) Screened with no mitigation
- (2) Screened with mitigation
- (3) Screened and EQIA required

CONSULTATIONS AND SURVEYS

The consultations and surveys noted below cover October to date: -

CONSULTATION / SURVEY TITLE	STATUS CLOSED
2021 Event Survey Corporate Recovery Plan	Closed 15 Oct 21
Balmoral Show Survey 2021	Closed 22 Oct 21
Borough Life Feeling Safe in Our Borough Survey	Closed 22 Nov 21
Draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan 202 –2026 Survey	Closed 3 Dec 21
Antrim and Newtownabbey Policing and Community Safety Partnership Survey	Closed 10 Jan 22
Enchanted Winter Garden 2021 Survey	Closed 14 Jan 22
Christmas Switch- On Events 2021 Survey	Closed 20 Jan 22
	STATUS OPEN
Enchanted Winter Garden 2021 Staff and Elected Member Survey	Closes 31 Jan 22
Borough Life Have Your Say Cleanliness of the Borough 2022	Closes 28 Feb 22
Draft Dual Language Street Sign Policy Consultation	Closes 31 Mar 22

Members were reminded that a separate consultation and survey update would be brought in due course to inform of feedback received.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
 Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.6 HR/HR/019 AGENCY STAFF 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 appended provides an update for Members on the use of agency staff as at December 2021 as compared to December 2020. It excludes limited ad-hoc agency cover, which is necessary to provide operational cover, at short notice (Appendix 1 circulated).

The expenditure on agency workers in December 2021 was circulated, Appendix 2.

The cost of agency staff has increased for the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 December 2021 at 7.36% of all staffing costs compared to 4.14% for the same period last year. It should be noted that agency expenditure was significantly reduced last year following the release of agency workers in May 2020. This year's costs have also increased due to the late application of the April 2020 pay award and the respective back charges incurred.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.7 HR/HR/10 NJC PAY AWARD 2021/2022 - OFFICAL INDUSTRIAL ACTION BALLOT

Members were advised that correspondence was received from UNITE the Union on 17 December 2021 providing notice that they are in dispute concerning the pay rates for 2021/2022, for workers whose pay is based on the pay awards made by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

UNITE have progressed this with further correspondence received on 18 January 2022 providing formal notification to the Council of an official industrial action ballot. Unite have advised they intend to ballot their members for industrial action with ballot papers to be issued on 25 January 2022 to 24 February 2022. A copy of this letter was circulated Appendix 1.

The outcome of ballots conducted by Unison, GMB and Unite all resulted in a rejection of the Employers' national pay offer for Local Government employees. Following this outcome, the Employers re-iterated their final offer (circulated Appendix 2) in response to the unions' request for an improvement.

GMB, UNITE the Union and NIPSA are the recognised trade unions within the Council. UNISON is not one of the Council's recognised trade unions and whilst they proceeded to ballot their members for industrial action from 1 December 2021 to 10 February 2022, the turnout failed to reach the required 50 per cent.

Members were advised that the Unite ballot currently underway is a disaggregated ballot which means that strike action could be taken at each individual Council where a turnout of at least 50% is secured and where members vote in favour of strike action.

GMB's national local government committee also plans to meet shortly to discuss its next steps in light of its consultative ballot to members which closed on 13 December 2021.

Updates would be provided to Committee as they arise.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.8 G-LEG-321/15 RATHMULLAN DRIVE, NEWTOWNABBEY

Members were advised that correspondence (circulated) had been received from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to confirm that Rathmullan Drive, Newtownabbey, has now been adopted by DfI Roads in accordance with the provisions of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Councillor Ramsay and agreed

that the following Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease at this point.

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 IN CONFIDENCE CD/GEN/005 CAPITAL PROJECTS PROGRESS REPORT TO 31ST DECEMBER 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the progress of Capital Projects within the built environment.

The report is presented under the following sections:

- Projects completed year to date
- Projects currently under construction
- Projects currently in design stage
- Projects currently in initiation stage
- Projects awaiting procurement
- Projects at inception stage

Projects Completed Year to Date

The table below lists the projects completed in the nine months to 31st December. The value of these schemes total £1.3m and will be capitalised (added to Councils balance sheet) this financial year.

Project	Expenditure b/fwd £	21/22 Spend £	Total Spend £
Threemilewater Park Phase 1			
Sixmilewater Park Entrance			
Ballyearl - Driving Range Improvements			
Gateway Exhibition Area fit out			
Village Renewals - Killead Road repairs and landscaping			
Sixmile Leisure Centre and Forum LC Plant refurbishment			
Antrim Central Car Park - Refurbishment			
	671,503	649,772	1,321,274

Projects Currently Under Construction

Table 2 below lists all projects that are currently on-site or where contractor appointment has been made along with the anticipated completion date. The value of schemes currently under construction total £8.2m with a spend to date of £1.8m.

Project	Project Budget £	External Funding £	Estimated Cost to Council £	Expected Completion
Sculpture, Loughshore Park, Antrim				Mar-22
Car Park Refurb - Antrim Forum car park - Package 1				Jan-22
Crematorium				Dec-22
Skate 100 Urban Sports Park			-	Mar-22
Valley LC pitch drainage		-		May-22
Glengormley Police Station Demolition + Meanwhile Use				Feb-22
Mossley Mill Concrete Band Health and Safety works		-		Feb-22
Blue / Green Infrastructure Projects : Antrim Boardwalk Phase 1 Refurbishment			-	Mar-22
CCTV Assets		-		Jul-22
Blue / Green Infrastructure			-	Mar-22

Riverfront Regeneration Scheme, Antrim				Nov-21	Mar-22
	16,191,536	7,660,239	8,531,297		

Projects Currently in Initiation Stage

Table 4 below lists projects where work has started on the main contract consultant appointment.

Project	Project Budget £	Expected On-site	Expected Completion	Notes
Antrim Town Boardwalk – Phase 2		Mar-23	Oct-23	Consultant PQQ to be evaluated
3G Training pitch - Monkstown		Dec-22	Jun-23	Consultant PQQ to be evaluated
Valley LC - VR project and upgrading works		TBC	TBC	Consultant PQQ to be evaluated
	3,205,559			

Projects Awaiting Procurement

Table 5 below lists projects where work has started on business cases, concept development or funding application has been made. These will not have started a procurement process.

Project	Project Budget £	Expected Completion	Notes
3G Pitch, The Diamond, Rathcoole		TBC	Business case to be finalised
Steeple House Refurbishment	TBC	TBC	Insurance matters resolved
Carmoney Cemetery - Columbarium and Welfare Facilities	TBC	TBC	Business case to be finalised
Cranfield Jetty		TBC	Option appraisal being prepared
Dunanney Centre extension/replacement		TBC	Business case to be finalised
Jordanstown Loughshore Park café extension		TBC	Concept drawings prepared
Hazelbank Pavilion and Visitor Facilities		TBC	Business case to be finalised
Queenspark Avenue, Glengormley		TBC	In consultation with NIHE
Sixmilewater Park Pedestrian Bridge, Ballyclare		Mar-23	Grant application submitted
Castle Gardens Café Refurbishment		TBC	Cost estimates prepared for approval

Public Realm – Whiteabbey Village Improvements	TBC	TBC	Pending grant application
Small Settlements Schemes	TBC	TBC	Pending grant application
	6,310,000		

Projects at Inception Stage

The table below listed projects awaiting development.

Project
Building C, Mossley Mill
Kings Park MUGA
Play Parks Development
Randalstown 3G pitch
3G Pitch Ballyclare
Ballyearl LC - Phase 3 Refurb
Threemilewater Park Phase 3
Crumlin Glen Phase 2
Mallusk Play Park
Neillsbrook Community Centre Improvements
Sixmile LC – Changing Area Refurbishment
Crumlin HRC
Parks and Cemeteries Improvement Works

Following a question from a Member on the progress of Projects at Inception Stage the Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance advised Members that the capital team were awaiting a project brief on the Kings Park MUGA project.

The Deputy Chief Executive of Finance and Governance further clarified the Governance Framework for projects from inception stage to completion and that DEA Working Groups were a mechanism to discuss emerging projects.

Proposed by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor Cushman and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

6.2 IN CONFIDENCE FI/PRO/GEN/044 PROCUREMENT TENDER REPORTS AND AWARD OF CONTRACTS

Members were reminded that Council agreed in June 2021 that the Council Scheme of Delegation be used for the award of contracts and Members be updated retrospectively.

This process allows service and project delivery to be expedited more efficiently and facilitates timely delivery of actions against the Council's Recovery plan.

A list of contracts approved by the Corporate Leadership Team and awarded in January 2022 was circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Webb and agreed

that the report be noted.

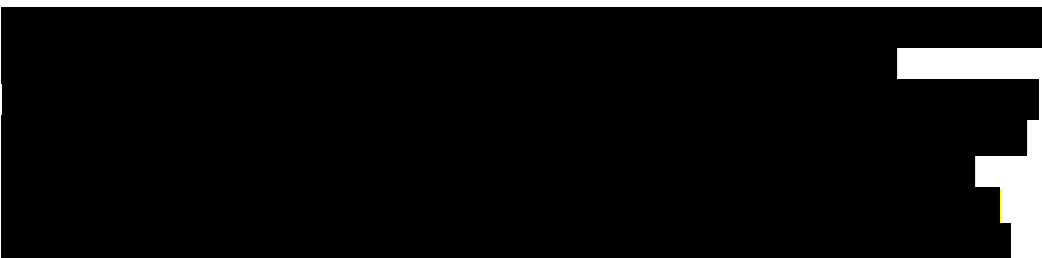
NO ACTION

6.3 IN CONFIDENCE G/DPFI/2 QUARTERLY REPORT ON FOI/EIR/DPA REQUESTS

A report has been prepared on requests received in the third quarter of the year (1 October to 31 December 2021) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) and this was circulated.

A summary of the quarter's statistics is as follows:

- There was an 11% increase in the number of requests on the same period the previous year.
- Of the 71 requests received, 53 were under FOI, 14 under EIR and 4 under DPA.
- 64 requests were completed within the quarter.
- 97% of the requests were completed within the legislative deadlines of 20 days for FOI and EIR requests and a calendar month for requests made under DPA.
- The sections that received the most requests in the quarter were Environmental Health (17), Finance (16), Governance (13) and Planning (12).
- Four appeals were received during the quarter. In three of the appeals the Council's original decision was upheld and no further information was provided. In the fourth appeal further information was provided as a result of the requester providing a broader indication of the information they required.

- 



Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Webb 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 and the meeting concluded at 6.54 pm.

MAYOR

Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.