



## Belfast City Council

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| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Potential industrial action involving Belfast City Council employees on 30 November 2011. |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 21 October 2011   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Peter McNaney, Chief Executive  |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Jill Minne, Head of HR  |

### Relevant Background Information

On 14 September 2011 the Trade Union Congress voted unanimously in favour of industrial action over the government's proposals to increase employee pension contributions in the public sector pension scheme.

Currently 70 percent of the Council's workforce is a member of a trade union. 33% are members of NIPSA, 30% members of GMB, 27% are members of Unite and 10% are members of SIPTU.

HR has also identified the make up of each of these unions at a service level in order to establish those services potentially most affected by any industrial action.

### Key Issues

- During October the local government trade unions will ballot their members on industrial action with the result being known by mid November.
- It is anticipated that this will result in strike action by Unite, NIPSA, GMB and SIPTU members on **30 November 2011**.
- As with previous national industrial action (e.g. strike action in July 2008 as a result of the national pay offer) Belfast City Council will initiate its Industrial Action Contingency Group (IACG) chaired by the Head of HR to establish contingency planning arrangements in the event of industrial action.
- This group will manage all issues arising from the strike through a planned and coordinated approach to ensure that essential services are maintained where possible and that communication is ongoing with elected members, the media and the workforce.

- The IACG will determine exemption requirements, i.e. those individuals or groups of staff who should remain in work during industrial action to minimise disruption to service provision, meet health and safety obligations, and provide business continuity in so far as is practicable (e.g. Registrars, Malone House and Belfast Castle staff for weddings and civil partnerships; cemetery operatives; health and safety staff). IACG will discuss and seek to agree these exempt staff with the council's Trade Union Coordinators.
- The Chief Executive and Head of HR will meet with Party Group Leaders to discuss the contingencies to be put in place for the strike to ensure that disruption to the public is minimised.

**Resource Implications**

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

**Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the information as set out in this report. A further report will be provided to committee once the council has been officially notified of the result of the ballots and communication with members will be ongoing.

**Decision Tracking**

Report to be made to committee in November 2011

**Key to Abbreviations**

IACG - Council's Industrial Action Contingency Group.

**Documents Attached**

None