

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall
on Tuesday, 7th May, 2024 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy) (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan);
The High Sheriff (Councillor S. Douglas); and
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers; and
Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett, Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCormick, McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKay, McKeown, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Murray, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, Ó Néill, Smyth, Verner and Walsh.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Councillors Bradley, P. Donnelly, Flynn, Hanvey, McMullan and Whyte.

Declarations of Interest

The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan) and Councillors Beattie, Doherty, M. Donnelly, Duffy declared an interest in relation to the item "Social Supermarket Fund" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes and "Social Supermarkets 2024/25" within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that their employers were recipients of the fund.

Alderman Rodgers and Councillor Ferguson declared an interest in relation to the item "Blanchflower Stadium – Preferential Use Agreement" within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that they were shareholders of Glentoran Football Club.

Councillor Canavan declared an interest in relation to the item "Social Supermarket Fund" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes and

“Social Supermarkets 2024/25” within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that she was a Board Member of one of the organisations that delivered the fund.

Councillor Smyth declared an interest in relation to the item “Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations 2024” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his wife was employed by NILGA.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy),
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin,

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 8th April, be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy) congratulated Cliftonville Football Team on its Irish Cup win and, at the request of Councillor Smyth, agreed to host a reception in City Hall to acknowledge the achievement.

The Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy) and several Councillors congratulated all those who had participated in the Belfast City Marathon, particularly Councillor Garrett who had completed his first marathon.

Alderman McCoubrey welcomed the completion of two projects in Greater Shankill, the Greater Shankill Community Council who had received investment through the Belfast Investment Fund and had become the home of a number of community groups, also Berlin Swifts Football Club which had received investment from the Local Investment Fund to build changing facilities and undertake groundwork and thanked the Council staff who assisted.

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Lord Mayor agreed to write to and invite The Breda Bells and 110th Scouts to his parlour to congratulate them on their fundraising and participation in the Belfast City Marathon.

Councillor Black congratulated the Immaculata Football Club on becoming club champions.

Councillor Bunting congratulated the Council’s Parks employees on the success of Springfest at Malone House and the staff at Belvoir Park Primary School on the awards they had recently received, and the Lord Mayor agreed to write a letter of congratulations to Belvoir Park Primary School.

Councillor Collins commended the staff and students of Queen’s University who had taken part in a peaceful sit-in on campus in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

Councillor Doran congratulated Ballysillan Swifts 2012 Team, Ballysillan Swifts U18 Team and Westland Young Men Football Club on their recent wins and also the Belfast Boys Model School on winning the Derrytrasna Award for Exceptional Pastoral

Care and the Lord Mayor agreed to write to the school to congratulate them on their win.

Councillor Ferguson congratulated the Northern Ireland School Boys on winning the Centenary Shield and the Lord Mayor agreed to write a letter of congratulations to the team.

Councillor Long paid tribute to Councillor McMullan who had announced that he would stand down as a Councillor and thanked him for his achievements as a member of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

Councillor Murray congratulated the Oh Yeah Music Centre on winning the Grassroots Venue: Spirit of the Scene Award and commended the Council's Parks employees on the success of Springfest at Malone House.

Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies/Position of Responsibility

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from Sinn Fein and the Green Party of the following changes in Positions of Responsibility:

- Councillor Duffy to replace Councillor Nic Bhranair on the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
- Councillor Flynn to replace Councillor Smyth on the Climate and City Resilience Committee; and
- Councillor Smyth to replace Councillor Flynn on the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

The Council noted the changes.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Black,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th April, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Irish Language Policy

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th April, under the heading "Irish Language Policy" to adopt the recommendations as set out in the report, be amended to state that the Council will not adopt the recommendations and will consider the Irish Language Policy once an Irish Language Commissioner is in place. "

On a recorded vote, seventeen Members voted for the amendment and thirty-six against and it was declared lost.

For (17)	Against (36)
The High Sheriff (Councillor Sammy Douglas); Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers; and Councillors R. Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Doran, D. Douglas, Ferguson, Kelly, McCormick, McDowell, I. McLaughlin and Verner.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan); and Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, T. Brooks, Canavan, Carson, Collins, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McDonough-Brown, McKay, McKeown, R. McLaughlin, Murray, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, O'Neill, Smyth and Walsh.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th April, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Murray,
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly,

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 9th April, be approved and adopted.”

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Nic Bhranair,
Seconded by Councillor Duffy, and

That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 10th April, be approved and adopted.

Notice of Motion Quarterly Update

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Council agreed to retain the following two notices of motion which had been recommended for closure, and to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to request that funding be committed to the provision of nighttime services:

- Translink – Nighttime provision of services (ID 289); and
- Late Night Public Transport (ID 349).

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the forgoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 10th April, 2024, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor McKeown,
Seconded by Councillor Doran, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 17th April, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 16th April, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor R. M. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 11th April, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor McDonough-Brown,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 23rd April, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Motion

Agricultural Fines for Pollution

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Smyth proposed:

“This Council notes the ongoing issues with deteriorating water quality in our rivers and waterways across Northern Ireland as highlighted in the recent New State of Our Rivers Report by the Rivers Trust.

Of the 450 river stretches looked at in Northern Ireland, 0% achieved good overall status, and 12% were given either poor or bad overall status. Only 31% achieved good ecological status, and just 2 stretches achieved high ecological status, and almost 70% failed to meet the requirements for good ecological status. This has impacted on the overall quality of Lough Neagh, which supplies over half the drinking water to Belfast, due to excess run-off from industrial agricultural processes.

This Council recognises that we are in the midst of a freshwater crisis in Northern Ireland and are concerned that the capping of agriculture penalties for repeated negligent breaches at 15% in October 2022 is not a sufficient deterrent.

As such, this Council calls on the DAERA Minister to reinstate the previous more stringent penalties to more accurately reflect the environmental harm caused.”

The motion was seconded by The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan).

On a recorded vote, thirty-seven Members voted for the motion and thirteen against and it was declared carried.

For (37)	Against (13)
The Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan); Aldermen Copeland and Rodgers; and Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Canavan, Carson, Collins, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKay, McKeown, R. McLaughlin, Murray, Nelson, O’Neill, Smyth and Walsh.	The High Sheriff (Councillor Sammy Douglas); Aldermen, Lawlor, McCoubrey and McCullough; and Councillors R. Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Doran, D. Douglas, Ferguson, Kelly, I. McLaughlin and Verner.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson