

Council

ANNUAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall
on Monday, 1st June, 2026 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Kelly (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Doherty);
The High Sheriff (Councillor McCoubrey);
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCullough
and Rodgers; and
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Beattie, Bell,
Black, Bower, Bradley, Brennan, R. Brooks,
T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain,
Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly,
R. M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas,
Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,
Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, McAteer, McCabe, McCallin,
McCann, McCromick, McCusker, McDonough-Brown,
McDowell, McKay, McKeown, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin, Meenehan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson,
Ó Néill, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Councillors P. Donnelly, Duffy, Groogan, McCabe, McCann and Verner declared an interest in relation to the item 'Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting' in that they were employed by or associated with organisations which were in receipt of PEACEPLUS funding.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the item 'Request for use of City Hall grounds for Summer Cinema 2026' in that her employer was involved with the event.

Councillor Groogan also declared an interest in relation to the item 'Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme' in that her employer was involved.

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in relation to the item 'Safety Issues in the City Centre', in that his employer had been mentioned at Committee.

Councillor Smyth declared an interest in the items 'Belfast Stories - Community Grants' and 'Belfast Child - Seamless Pathway for Children and Families' in that he was employed by the Belfast Trust.

Councillor Long declared in interest in item 'Call for Evidence by Criminal Justice Committee' in that his wife was the Minister for Justice.

As the above-mentioned items did not become the subject of debate, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.

Councillors Bunting, D. Douglas, Doran and Verner declared an interest in relation to the item 'Request for Funding' in that they were associated with applicants and left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

Minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the item 'Vacant to Vibrant Programme Update' in that her employer was in receipt of a grant through the scheme.

Councillor Groogan also declared an interest in relation to the item '2 Royal Avenue Update' in that she had met with some of the groups which were being considered but that she had not expressed any opinion.

As the above-mentioned items did not become the subject of debate, the Member was not required to leave the meeting.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Kelly),
Seconded by Councillor Bunting, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Council of 5th May, 2026, be taken as read and signed as correct.

Change of Membership on Outside Bodies

The Chief Executive advised the Council that notification had been received from the Alliance Party which indicated that it wished to replace Councillor Bell with Councillor Maghie on the Board of the Eastside Partnership; and Councillor Harvey with Councillor Murray on Visit Belfast.

The Council noted the changes.

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent retirements of long-standing staff members Joanne O'Prey and Pamela Davidson. The Council wished them well in their retirement.

Councillor R. Brooks expressed her deepest condolences to former Councillor George Dorrian, his wife Lauren, and to their wider family, on the passing of their beloved daughter, Edie.

Councillor S. Douglas paid tribute to the work of Kinship Care and congratulated them on their first ever Kinship Care Celebration Week. He praised all those who fostered children. At the request of the Member, the Lord Mayor agreed to send a letter of thanks and appreciation to Kinship Care.

Request to Film Proceedings

The Chief Executive advised the Council that a request to film parts of the Council meeting had been received from a number of media outlets.

The Council acceded to the request.

Appointment of Positions of Responsibility 2026/2027

The Chief Executive drew the Council's attention to a report which identified the persons who had been selected by the Nominating Officer of each Political Party to hold the following Positions of Responsibility in year four of the current Council term:

Civic Dignitaries

Lord Mayor	Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly
Deputy Lord Mayor	Councillor Hedley Abernethy

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Ian McLaughlin
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Arder Carson

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Joe Duffy
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Sam Nelson

People and Communities Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Jenna Maghie
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Micheal Donnelly

Licensing Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Tara Brooks
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Conor McKay

Planning Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Ryan Murphy
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Natasha Brennan

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Dónal Lyons
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Brónach Anglin

Standards and Business Committee

Chairperson	Alderman James Lawlor
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Gary McKeown

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Fiona McAteer
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Áine McCabe

Policing and Community Safety Partnership - Chairpersons

Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Tara Brooks (Chairperson)

North Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Sam Nelson (Chairperson)

South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Tara Brooks (Chairperson)

East Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Séamas de Faoite (Chairperson)

West Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Ian McLaughlin (Chairperson)

The Council agreed to appoint the Members to the positions of responsibility as set out above.

Expressions of Thanks

The Lord Mayor reviewed her year in office, which she stated had been an incredible honour and that she had truly loved getting out and visiting communities across the City. She outlined that she had been privileged to be the first female Lord Mayor from the Democratic Unionist Party and that she had been so proud to represent her community. She highlighted that she had been delighted to support her chosen charities, Little Heroes, South Belfast Alternatives, Tre-Eco and South Belfast Sure Start. She stated that particular highlights for her had included welcoming His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla to Belfast and to have been the First Citizen at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. She thanked the Deputy Lord Mayor, the High Sheriff, Council staff, her Party and her husband, family and friends for all of their support and wished the incoming Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor every success for the year ahead.

The Deputy Lord Mayor reflected on his year in office and paid tribute to the Lord Mayor, the High Sheriff, his wife and children and Council staff for the valuable assistance which they had provided. He stated that it had been one of the greatest honours of his life. His highlights had included welcoming the President of Ireland, Catherine Connolly, to Belfast and leading the Pride and Mela parades. He had been grateful to have worked with a number of important charities during his time in office, including the Children's Hospice, Belfast City of Sanctuary and the People's Kitchen. He wished the incoming Lord Mayor and Deputy Mayor well in their forthcoming term of office.

Tributes

Representatives of all the Political Parties paid tribute to the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord for the manner in which they had fulfilled their duties during their year in office.

Installation of Lord Mayor

The Chief Executive reminded the Council that it had, earlier in the meeting, approved the Positions of Responsibility for 2026/2027 and that Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly had been nominated to serve as Lord Mayor.

Accordingly, Councillor R.M. Donnelly was installed in Office for the period to end on the date of the annual meeting of the Council in 2027.

Councillor R.M. Donnelly thanked her Political Party for nominating her to serve as Lord Mayor. She stated that she was honoured to be the first Irish-speaking, female Lord Mayor of Belfast. She highlighted that she wanted to put young people, diversity and language rights at the heart of everything that she would do throughout her year in office. She stated that she was particularly looking forward to welcoming the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann to Belfast. She paid tribute to the previous Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor for the manner in which they had carried out their duties. She stated that she was looking forward to the year ahead and to working with the Deputy Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff.

(The Lord Mayor, Councillor R.M. Donnelly, in the Chair.)

Installation of Deputy Lord Mayor

The Council was again reminded that earlier in the meeting Councillor Abernethy had, under the Positions of Responsibility for 2026/2027, been nominated to serve as Deputy Lord Mayor.

Accordingly, Councillor Abernethy was installed in Office for the period to end on the date of the annual meeting of the Council in 2027.

He paid tribute to the previous Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor, thanked his Political Party for nominating him, thanked his family and friends for their support, and outlined his main objectives for his term in office. He stated that he was looking forward to the year ahead, to listening and learning, and to working with the Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff.

Appointment of Members to Committees 2026/2027

The Chief Executive drew the Council's attention to a report which identified the following persons who had been nominated by the Nominating Officer of each Political Party to the Council's Standing Committees and to the (District) Policing and Community Safety Partnerships for 2026/2027:

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

1	Chairperson Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ian McLaughlin
2	Deputy Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Arder Carson
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ciaran Beattie

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4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Christina Black
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Natasha Brennan
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Matt Garrett
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ronan McLaughlin
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ryan Murphy
9	Sinn Féin	Councillor Tomás Ó Néill
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sarah Bunting
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Fred Cobain
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Jordan Doran
13	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Nicola Verner
14	Alliance	Councillor Michael Long
15	Alliance	Councillor Jenna Maghie
16	Alliance	Councillor Micky Murray
17	Alliance	Councillor Sam Nelson
18	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Dónal Lyons
19	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Séamas de Faoite
20	Green Party	Councillor Brian Smyth

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

1	Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Joe Duffy
2	Deputy Chairperson Alliance	Councillor Sam Nelson
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Christina Black
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Áine McCabe
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Conor McKay
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ronan McLaughlin
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Luke Meenehan
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Tomás Ó Néill
9	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman James Lawlor
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sarah Bunting
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sammy Douglas
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Tracy Kelly
13	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ian McLaughlin
14	Alliance	Councillor Fiona McAteer
15	Alliance	Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown
16	Alliance	Councillor Christine Bower
17	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Séamas de Faoite
18	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Dónal Lyons
19	Green Party	Councillor Áine Groogan
20	People Before Profit Alliance	Councillor Michael Collins

People and Communities Committee

1	Chairperson Alliance	Councillor Jenna Maghie
2	Deputy Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Micheal Donnelly
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ciaran Beattie
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Christina Black
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Nichola Bradley
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Claire Canavan
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Matt Garrett
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor JJ Magee
9	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ruth Brooks
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sarah Bunting

11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Fred Cobain
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Jordan Doran
13	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Nicola Verner
14	Alliance	Councillor Hedley Abernethy
15	Alliance	Councillor Christine Bower
16	Alliance	Councillor Micky Murray
17	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Séamas de Faoite
18	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Gary McKeown
19	Green Party	Councillor Anthony Flynn
20	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Sonia Copeland

Licensing Committee

1	Chairperson Alliance	Councillor Tara Brooks
2	Deputy Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Conor McKay
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Brónach Anglin
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Nichola Bradley
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Micheal Donnelly
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Siobhán McCallin
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Caoimhín McCann
9	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ruth Brooks
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Davy Douglas
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Bradley Ferguson
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Tracy Kelly
13	Alliance	Councillor Hedley Abernethy
14	Alliance	Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown
15	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Séamas de Faoite
16	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Gary McKeown
17	Green Party	Councillor Brian Smyth
18	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Jim Rodgers
19	Traditional Unionist Voice	Councillor Ron McDowell
20	Independent	Councillor Paul McCusker

Planning Committee

1	Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Ryan Murphy
2	Deputy Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Natasha Brennan
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Brónach Anglin
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Arder Carson
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Matt Garrett
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Áine McCabe
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Caoimhín McCann
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor JJ Magee
9	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman James Lawlor
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Dean McCullough
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Jordan Doran
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Davy Douglas
13	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sammy Douglas
14	Alliance	Councillor Hedley Abernethy
15	Alliance	Councillor David Bell
16	Alliance	Councillor Tara Brooks
17	Independent	Councillor Eric Hanvey
18	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Carl Whyte

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19	Green Party	Councillor Áine Groogan
20	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Jim Rodgers

Climate and City Resilience Committee

1	Chairperson Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Dónal Lyons
2	Deputy Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Brónach Anglin
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Micheal Donnelly
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor JJ Magee
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Caoimhín McCann
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Luke Meenehan
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Séanna Walsh
9	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Frank McCoubrey
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Dean McCullough
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Bradley Ferguson
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Andrew McCormick
13	Alliance	Councillor David Bell
14	Alliance	Councillor Tara Brooks
15	Alliance	Councillor Michael Long
16	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Carl Whyte
17	Green Party	Councillor Áine Groogan
18	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Sonia Copeland
19	People Before Profit Alliance	Councillor Michael Collins
20	Independent	Councillor Paul McCusker

Standards and Business Committee

1	Chairperson Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman James Lawlor
2	Deputy Chairperson Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Gary McKeown
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Nichola Bradley
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Arder Carson
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Siobhán McCallin
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ronan McLaughlin
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor JJ Magee
9	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ryan Murphy
10	Sinn Féin	Councillor Séanna Walsh
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Dean McCullough
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Davy Douglas
13	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Bradley Ferguson
14	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Tracy Kelly
15	Alliance	Councillor Christine Bower
16	Alliance	Councillor Michael Long
17	Alliance	Councillor Fiona McAteer
18	Alliance	Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown
19	Green Party	Councillor Anthony Flynn
20	Traditional Unionist Voice	Councillor Ron McDowell

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

1	Chairperson Alliance	Councillor Fiona McAteer
2	Deputy Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Áine McCabe
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Natasha Brennan
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Claire Canavan
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Caoimhín McCann
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Conor McKay
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Tomás Ó Néill
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Séanna Walsh
9	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Frank McCoubrey
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ruth Brooks
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Bradley Ferguson
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Andrew McCormick
13	Alliance	Councillor Christine Bower
14	Independent	Councillor Eric Hanvey
15	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Carl Whyte
16	Green Party	Councillor Anthony Flynn
17	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Sonia Copeland
18	People Before Profit Alliance	Councillor Michael Collins
19	Traditional Unionist Voice	Councillor Ron McDowell
20	Independent	Councillor Paul McCusker

Policing and Community Safety Partnership Political Members

Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Tara Brooks (Chairperson)
Councillor Claire Canavan
Councillor Séamas de Faoite
Councillor Davy Douglas
Councillor Joe Duffy
Councillor JJ Magee
Councillor Conor McKay
Councillor Ian McLaughlin
Councillor Sam Nelson

North Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Sam Nelson (Chairperson)
Alderman Dean McCullough
Councillor Nichola Bradley
Councillor Fred Cobain
Councillor Ron McDowell
Councillor JJ Magee

South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Tara Brooks (Chairperson)
Councillor Natasha Brennan
Councillor Sarah Bunting
Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
Councillor Conor McKay
Councillor Gary McKeown

East Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Séamas de Faoite (Chairperson)
Councillor Ruth Brooks
Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
Councillor Davy Douglas
Councillor Fiona McAteer
Councillor Conor McKay

West Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Councillor Ian McLaughlin (Chairperson)
Alderman Jim Rodgers
Councillor David Bell
Councillor Claire Canavan
Councillor Micheal Donnelly
Councillor Caoimhín McCann

The Council agreed to appoint the Members to the Council's Standing Committees and Community and Safety Partnerships for 2026/2027, as set out above.

Reconsideration of a decision in respect of the Irish Language Policy

The Council was provided with a copy of the legal opinion which was obtained in relation to the call-in of the Council decision of 1st October, 2025, to approve the draft Irish Language Policy.

The Council noted:

- the contents of the legal opinion;
- that the call-in was not considered to have merit on community impact grounds; and
- that the decision would now be implemented in accordance with Standing Order 48.

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor I. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor McCallin,

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.”

Requests for Funding

Moved by Councillor I. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading be amended to provide that the Committee agrees to fund the 47 discretionary funding support requests as outlined in the report and

agrees that the funding, totalling £339,242, be allocated from the non-recurrent community capacity building monies included in the Growth Fund for 26/27”.

The following addition, proposed by Councillor McCallin, was agreed by the proposer:

“with a report to come back to the committee on up to £100,000 being allocated for dual language signage in the extended Gaeltacht area as identified in the Irish Language Policy.”

On a vote on the amendment standing in the name of Councillor I. McLaughlin, as amended by Councillor McCallin, thirty-seven Members voted for it, eighteen against, and with one no vote, it was accordingly declared carried.

Minutes of the Language Strategy Working Group

Moved by Councillor Walsh,
Seconded by Councillor Ó Néill and

Resolved – That the Council agrees that the Irish Language Commissioner, Pól Deeds, be invited to attend the next meeting of the Working Group.

Sunday Trading

Moved by Alderman McCullough
Seconded by Councillor Doran

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees not to designate the Belfast City Council area as a Holiday Resort designation to enable extended Sunday trading hours for larger retailers.”

On a vote, nineteen Members voted for amendment and 41 against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Further Amendment

Moved by Councillor Nelson
Seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading be rejected and accordingly agrees to the implementation of the in-principle Council decision from July 2025 and to designate the entire Belfast City Council area as a Holiday Resort designation under Article 6, paragraph (9) of the Shops Sunday (Sunday Trading) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.”

On a vote, ten Members voted for the amendment, forty-nine against and with one no vote, it was accordingly declared lost.

Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme

Moved by Councillor I. McLaughlin,
Seconded by The High Sheriff (Alderman McCoubrey)

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading, be amended to provide that a report be submitted to a future meeting seeking to allocate £50,000 from the growth fund for the tourism plan for the Greater Shankill area of the City.”

On a vote, sixteen Members voted for the amendment and thirty-nine against and it was accordingly declared lost.

**Outcome of the Judicial Review in relation to
Animal Welfare Services and new Animal
Welfare Legislation**

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Smyth and

Resolved - “That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading, be amended to provide that the Committee’s letter to the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee includes that the Council has concerns that introducing additional animal welfare enforcement responsibilities, without providing adequate resources, risks undermining both existing enforcement activity and the successful implementation of new legislation and, moreover, cannot be improved through legislation alone. It requires properly resourced enforcement services capable of investigating complaints, tackling illegal breeding and protecting vulnerable animals.”

External Funding for Pre-Accession Assistance

Moved by Councillor McDowell,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

“That the Council rejects the decision to write to the EU Commission and the British and Irish Governments regarding the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).”

On a vote, seventeen Members voted for the amendment and forty voted against it and it was accordingly declared lost.

Belfast Stories - Community Grants

Moved by Councillor Maghie,
Seconded by Councillor Murray,

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading, be

rejected and that accordingly the Council agrees to the recommendations as outlined in the report, namely, to:

- Award the recommended 5 creative project grants (up to £30,000) following completion of the assessment and moderation process;
- Note the 12 small grants up to £10,000 approved under delegated authority; and
- In light of the significant demand and high quality of submissions received, as outlined at 3.15, agrees to increase the fund for small grants utilising an additional allocation of £41,560 from the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) reserve to fund 4 additional projects.”

On a vote, thirty Members voted for the amendment and twenty-four against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Drumglass Park – SuDs Project

Moved by Councillor McKeown
Seconded by Councillor Lyons and

Resolved - “That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading, be amended to require that NI Water would detail options for physical and programmatic elements, as discussed at the South Area Working Group, that they were prepared to include for the benefit of the community as part of the project, ahead of public consultation, and to engage with Council officers and organisations in the area, given that the project appeared to be advancing at pace.”

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee were thereupon approved and adopted.

People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Maghie,
Seconded by Councillor Murray

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 12th May, 2026, be approved and adopted.”

European City of Sport 2026 Programme

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite and

Resolved – “That the Council agrees that the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 12th May, 2026, under

the above heading, be amended to also provide that letters are issued to the Home Office and to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, outlining the economic barrier faced by non-visa nationals who wish to travel from the Republic of Ireland to attend upcoming international cricket matches in Belfast (Ireland versus India and Ireland versus New Zealand) due to the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) process.”

Playground Accessibility – Update

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

Resolved – “That a report be submitted to a future meeting, asking officers to carry out a scoping exercise across all play parks in the city, to aim to have accessible play facilities for children with additional needs in each play park; to consider building new play parks on sites which are not suitable for housing or pitches; to investigate how it could work with the Department for Communities and the Shared Island Fund; and the creation of an exemplary park in each quarter of the City, with accessible play park equipment for children with additional needs.”

Pitch Partner and Facilities Management Agreements

At the request of a Member, officers were requested to consider the use of Blanchflower Playing Fields by St. Matthew’s and Doyle Football Clubs within the report coming back to Committee.

Dual Language Street Signs – Review of Data Survey Process

A Member requested that, in addition to issuing surveys to individuals listed within streets on the electoral register, that surveys would also be issued also to dwellings where no residents were listed on the electoral register, with a report to be submitted to a future meeting, outlining any additional costs associated with such a decision.

The City Solicitor provided legal advice to the Council in respect of the issue and confirmed that a report considering the Dual Language Street Sign policy was to be submitted to a future meeting of the People and Communities Committee, and that the issues raised would be included within it.

Requests for the Use of Parks

At the request of a Member, officers were requested to bring an update on the Social Value Levy Fund to the June meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Dog Fouling Programme

At the request of a Member, officers were requested to bring back information on the number of lamppost bins in storage and the plan for their installation across residential areas.

Dual Language Street Signs – University Street and Streets Not Reaching 15 Per Cent Threshold

Moved by Councillor Bunting
Seconded by Councillor Kelly,

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 12th May, 2026, under the above heading, be rejected and accordingly that the Council agrees that the dual language street sign applications for University Street, Colinvale, Friendly Way, McAuley Street, Mill Pond Glen, Shaftesbury Avenue and Stewart Street not be erected, and as such, the applications remain closed.”

On a vote, twenty-six Members voted for the amendment and thirty-one against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 12th May, 2026, were thereupon approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Duffy,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 13th and 27th May, 2026, be approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 20th May 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by S. Douglas and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 19th May 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 14th May, 2026, be approved and adopted.

Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 26th May, 2026, be approved and adopted.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson