

Council

MONTHLY MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall on Monday, 2nd February, 2015
at the hour of 6.00 o'clock p.m., pursuant to Notice

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
 (Councillor Mallon) (Chairman);
 the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Hendron);
 the High Sheriff (Councillor McKee);
 Aldermen Browne, M. Campbell, Ekin, Kingston,
 McCoubrey, L. Patterson, R. Patterson, Robinson,
 Rodgers, Stalford, Stoker and Webb;
 Councillors Attwood, Austin, Beattie, M.E. Campbell,
 Carson, Clarke, Convery, Corr, Cunningham, Curran,
 Garrett, Groves, Haire, Hanna, Hargey, Hussey,
 Hutchinson, Jones, Keenan, Kelly, Kennedy, Kyle,
 Mac Giolla Mhín, Magee, McAteer, McCabe, McCarthy,
 McNamee, McVeigh, Mullan, Newton, Ó Donnghaile,
 Reynolds, Spence, Thompson and Verner.

Reading of Scriptures

In accordance with Standing Order 9, the Lord Mayor read a passage from the Scriptures.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Minutes

Moved by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Mallon),
Seconded by Alderman Stalford and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 5th January be taken as read and signed as correct.

Access to the Council's Internet Site

At the request of Councillor McCarthy and with the permission of the Council, the Chief Executive undertook to provide clarification on the rationale for restricting access to some Biblical passages on the Council's Internet site.

Disclosure of Family Relationship

The Chief Executive informed the Council that, in accordance with Section 30 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, she had been advised by Councillor Spence that his cousin, Mr. Colin Willetts, had been offered an appointment as an Area Cleansing Manager within the Health and Environmental Services Department.

Noted.

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,
Seconded by Alderman R. Patterson,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd January be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Flood Alleviation in Belfast

At the request of Alderman Rodgers, the Council agreed that the minute under the heading "Flood Alleviation in Belfast" be amended to provide that the Ministers for Finance and Personnel, Agriculture and Rural Development, Social Development and, if considered necessary, the Ministers for the Environment and Regional Development, be invited to meet with an All-Party delegation from the Council to discuss Members' concerns around flood alleviation, cuts in funding and individual household's protection scheme.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd January were approved and adopted.

Parks and Leisure Committee

Moved by Councillor Newton,
Seconded by Councillor Reynolds and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Parks and Leisure Committee of 15th January be approved and adopted.

Development Committee

Moved by Councillor Hargey,
Seconded by Councillor Kennedy and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Development Committee of 20th January be approved and adopted.

Health and Environmental Services Committee

Moved by Councillor Corr,
Seconded by the High Sheriff (Councillor McKee) and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Health and Environmental Services Committee of 7th January be approved and adopted.

Dog Identification Tags

At the request of Alderman Stoker, the Council agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development requesting that, in the interest of safety, consideration be given to removing the statutory requirement for a dog to bear the name and contact details of its owner and making micro chipping the sole source of identification.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Alderman Ekin,
Seconded by Councillor Ó Donnghaile and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 21st January, omitting those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its power to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Town Planning Committee

Moved by Alderman Ekin
Seconded by Councillor McCarthy and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Town Planning Committee of 8th January, omitting those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Notices of Motion

Northern Ireland Driving Licences

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Alderman R. Patterson proposed:

“This Council condemns and deplors the decision made recently by the Transport Secretary for the United Kingdom to treat Northern Ireland citizens differently to citizens in England, Scotland and Wales by not approving the displaying of the National Flag on all future Northern Ireland driving licences. It hereby calls upon the Transport Secretary to immediately rescind that decision and recognise that Northern Ireland is an integral part of the United Kingdom and, furthermore, calls for all driving licences issued to every part of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, to have the Union Flag displayed. The citizens of Belfast and Northern Ireland deserve to be treated as equals and in the same way as all other parts of the United Kingdom.”

At the request of the proposer, the Council agreed to amend the Notice of Motion to the effect that it be replaced with the following:

“This Council:

1. expresses concern at the way in which the decision was taken by SDLP Environment Ministers to exclude Northern Ireland from the reforms currently taking effect in relation to the appearance of the Union flag on UK driving licences;
2. believes that such a decision is likely to harm community relations and cause hurt and offence to those citizens who would like to see such changes apply to their own driving licence;
3. calls upon the Minister to reverse his position and allow the changes to be implemented here;
4. believes that if the Minister is unwilling to embrace such change he should, as an absolute minimum, introduce an ‘opt out’ scheme, whereby those who do not want to have the flag appear on their licence can choose not to have it and everyone else can; and
5. recognises that failure to implement such a scheme would be unfair to those citizens who want the Union Flag to appear on their driving licence.”

The Motion, as amended, was seconded by Alderman Kingston.

On a vote by show of hands twenty-seven Members voted for the Motion and twenty-three against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Interface Barriers

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda Councillor Kyle proposed:

“This Council recognises that:

- Belfast as a city is seeing continued economic growth and regeneration but some communities are failing to derive significant benefit and, in fact, are falling further behind;
- interface barriers are recognised as having a negative impact on investment, regeneration and the health of those living in close proximity to them;
- the power/function of regeneration is being devolved to the City Council;
- in many cases, removing the barriers is not a realistic proposition until adequate confidence and a social infrastructure is built between the neighbouring communities; and
- the removal of barriers is a clear commitment from the Northern Ireland Executive in the ‘Together – Building a United Community’ Strategy.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to write to OFMDFM requesting that it provide a progress report on the development of this strategy and that it provide resources to enable the Council to take the lead with other statutory agencies in order to work with local communities to create a process leading to removal of these barriers.”

The Motion was seconded by Alderman Ekin.

The Lord Mayor confirmed that, in accordance with Standing Order 11(e), the Motion would be referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Lord Mayor
Chairman