

# Council

## MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall  
on Monday, 4th November, 2024 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Murray (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McCormick);  
The High Sheriff of Belfast, Councillor S. Douglas; and  
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey,  
McCullough and Rodgers; and  
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black,  
Bower, Bradley, Brennan, R. Brooks, T. Brooks,  
Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins,  
de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly,  
R. M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, Duffy,  
Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,  
Kelly, Long, Lyons, Maghie, Maskey,  
McAteer, McCabe, McCann,  
McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKay,  
McKeown, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin,  
Murphy, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, O'Neill, Smyth,  
Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

### **Summons**

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Magee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Doherty declared an interest in relation to the item "Social Supermarkets – Update" within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that his employer had received funding.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the items "Update on Hardship Programme 2024/25" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, "Social Supermarkets – Update" within the People and Communities Committee minutes and "Major Events Update" within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee minutes, in that she was employed by Forward South Partnership.

Councillor Groogan further declared an interest in relation to the item "Belfast 2024" within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee minutes, in that she had undertaken freelance work for the programme.

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Councillor Long declared an interest in relation to the item “Belfast City Council response to NI Executive's draft Programme for Government” in that his wife was the Minister for Justice.

Councillor McDonough-Brown declared an interest Councillor McDonough-Brown declared an interest in relation to the item “Update on Hardship Programme 2024/25” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his partner was employed by Save the Children.

Councillor R. McLaughlin declared an interest in relation to the item “Ending Violence against Women and Girls” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his partner was a Minister in the Executive Office and he left the room whilst the item was being discussed.

Councillor Nic Bhranair declared an interest in relation to the item “Ending Violence against Women and Girls” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that she was employed as a Special Adviser to a Minister in the Executive and she left the room whilst the item was being discussed.

**Minutes of the Council**

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murray),  
Seconded by Councillor Black, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 1st October, be taken as read and signed as correct.

**Official Announcements**

The Lord Mayor paid tribute to Mrs. G. Neill who had recently retired from the Council and wished her well in her retirement.

The Lord Mayor highlighted the recent SEUPB announcement of £13.5m of PEACEPLUS funding that had been awarded to Reconnected Belfast, focussed on the Waterworks and Alexandra Park in North Belfast.

The Lord Mayor acceded to a request from Councillor De Faoite to write to the family of the late Ms. Candy Devine to offer condolences on her recent passing.

Alderman Lawlor congratulated the organisers and recipients of the recent Northern Ireland Veterans Awards which recognised the important contribution that service leavers had made to the community as they transitioned to life after service.

Alderman McCullough congratulated the Lord Carson Memorial Junior LOL 132 on its constitution in the hall where Lord Carson lay the first foundation stone, North Belfast Orange Memorial and he credited Belfast Harbour LOL 1883, Ballymacarrett District LOL 6, Junior District Ballymacarrett LOL 3 and the Junior Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland on the formation of the new junior lodge.

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Councillor T. Brooks congratulated all those officers involved in the St Colmgall's Project which had won a RICS Award for its refurbishment and revitalisation.

Councillor De Faoite thanked the cultural events team and Belfast One for the events which had taken place over the Halloween period.

Councillor Doran congratulated Tynedale Residents Group in Ballysillan which had won Best Community Group in the Belfast in Bloom awards.

Councillor D. Douglas thanked all those who had participated in a 24 hour spinathon which had been organised by the Powered by Poppy campaign on aid of Laura Snodden and her family.

Councillor Ferguson thanked Sirocco Works Football Club who had invited him to attend its recent centenary dinner at City Hall and he congratulated the club on its centenary.

Councillor Flynn acknowledged the recent flash flooding that had occurred in Valencia, Spain and spoke of the need for more resources to be allocated the Climate and City Resilience Committee to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Councillor Groogan condemned the alarming recent news with regard to violence against women and girls and stated that more needed to be done as a society to address the issue and she paid credit to a number of activist groups, including Walkie Talkie Girls and Reclaim the Agenda, that had been trying to make change and called on the other Members to attend the upcoming Reclaim the Night event.

Councillor Kelly shared Councillor Groogan's sentiment with regard to violence against women and girls and encouraged attendance at the upcoming Reclaim the Night event.

Councillor Maghie highlighted the upcoming World Ventilate Day and the importance of clean indoor air.

Councillor McAteer congratulated Dundela Infants' School for winning the Belfast In Bloom award for Best School Garden – East Belfast and the Lord Mayor agreed to send a letter of congratulations to the school.

**Request to Address the Council**

The Chief Executive reported that a request to address the Council had been received from Ms. A. Whyte. Ms. White wished to address the Council in relation to the Motion on the agenda under the heading "Special Educational Needs – Legal Protection for Young People in NI", to discuss CalebsCauseNI and the lack of post-19 special educational needs education.

The Council acceded to the request and, accordingly, Ms. White was welcomed to the meeting by the Lord Mayor.

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Ms. White explained that CalebsCauseNI was a parent led campaign that was pushing for new legislation to be implemented for young people with disabilities when they leave school. She stated that her son, Caleb, was 16 years old and had complex needs, and that when he reached the age of 19, there would be no educational provision for him aside from local charities, however, the issue needed to be addressed by a change in legislation.

She stated that, unlike England and Wales, there was no such legislation in Northern Ireland and that she believed it was time to line up with the rest of the UK and she had started CalebsCauseNI to campaign for thousands of families that were in the same position.

Ms. White appealed to the Council to support her campaign for legislation to provide provision post 19 years of age education for those with complex needs.

The Lord Mayor thanked Ms. White for her presentation and wished her well in her campaign.

**Change of Position of Responsibility**

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from Sinn Fein that it wished make the following changes:

- Councillor Bradley to replace Councillor Magee as its representative on the North Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership (DPCSP); and
- Councillor Bradley to replace Councillor Magee as Deputy Chairperson of the Standards and Business Committee.

The Chief Executive further reported that notification had been received from the SDLP indicating that it wished to replace Councillor Whyte with Councillor Doherty as its representative on the Board of the Ulster Orchestra Society Limited.

The Council noted the changes.

**Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by Councillor Duffy, and

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 25th October and 1st November, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

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**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Long,  
Seconded by Councillor Groogan,

“That the Council agrees that erection of all the signage at the Forth Meadow Community Greenway be trilingual, that is, in English, Irish and Ulster Scots.”

On a vote, fifteen Members voted for the amendment and forty-two against and it was declared lost.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Accordingly, minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 25th October and 1st November, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

**Extract from minutes of: Strategic Policy and Resources  
Committee 20th September - Dual Language Signage  
at Olympia Leisure Centre**

The Chief Executive advised the Council that the decision in relation to Dual Language Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre had been subject to call-in and that the legal opinion had been circulated and concluded that the call-in did not have merit.

He explained that if the Council was minded to ratify the decision, it would be required to do so by adopting the minute, or if a vote was required, it would be by simple majority.

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie

That the minute, under the heading “Dual Language Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September, 2024, be approved and adopted.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Kelly,  
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

“That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September under the heading “Dual Language Signage at the Olympia Leisure Centre” be rejected.”

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On a vote, sixteen Members voted for the amendment and forty-one against and it was declared lost.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Accordingly, the minute under the heading “Dual Language Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September, 2024, was approved and adopted.

**Minutes of People and Communities Committee**

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,  
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th October, be approved and adopted.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Abernethy,  
Seconded by Councillor Maghie, and

Resolved – That the Council agrees that the decision of the People and Communities Committee at its meeting on 8th October, under the heading “Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) – Proposed Annual Schedule of Charges 2025/26” be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.”

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor McKay,  
Seconded by Councillor O’Neill,

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the People and Communities Committee at its meeting on 8th October, in relation to an application for a second street nameplate at Wellington Park Terrace, under the heading “Proposal for Dual Language Street Signage” be taken back to the Committee for further consideration, together with other similar applications which have met the threshold for approval but have been previously deferred, following an undertaking by officers to look at international best practice and develop a mechanism to deal with such applications.”

On a vote, forty-one Members voted for the amendment and sixteen against and it was declared carried.

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**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th October, were approved and adopted.

**Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee**

Moved by Nelson,  
Seconded by Smyth, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th and 23rd October, be approved and adopted.

**Minutes of Licensing Committee**

Moved by Alderman Rodgers,  
Seconded by Alderman McCullough, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 16th October, 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 Carson,  
Seconded by Councillor Murphy, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 15th October, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Minutes of Standards and Business Committee**

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,  
Seconded by Councillor D. Douglas and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 24th October, be approved and adopted.

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**Motion**

**Special Educational Needs –  
Legal Protection for Young People in NI**

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Doherty proposed the following motion:

“The Council is concerned that no legislation providing legal protection for young people over the age of 19 with Special Education Needs exists in NI, in contrast with England and Wales.

The Council commends tireless efforts and campaigning of everyone connected with Caleb's Cause.

And will write to Ministers for Communities, Education and Health requesting that the required legislation be enacted to provide legal protection to young people in Northern Ireland.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Whyte.

At the request of Councillor O'Neill, the proposer and seconder agreed to insert the following paragraph:

*“Alongside addressing the current gaps in Equality and Disability Legislation, that this council calls on the Minister of Education to ensure the intended outcomes of the RAISE programme are adjusted to meet the needs and experience of young people transitioning from Special Education and/or with SEND”*

The motion, as amended, therefore read:

“The Council is concerned that no legislation providing legal protection for young people over the age of 19 with Special Education Needs exists in NI, in contrast with England and Wales.

The Council commends tireless efforts and campaigning of everyone connected with Caleb's Cause.

**Alongside addressing the current gaps in Equality and Disability Legislation, that this council calls on the Minister of Education to ensure the intended outcomes of the RAISE programme are adjusted to meet the needs and experience of young people transitioning from Special Education and/or with SEND** and will write to Ministers for Communities, Education and Health requesting that the required legislation be enacted to provide legal protection to young people in Northern Ireland.”



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The motion, as amended, standing in the name of Councillor Doherty, was put to the meeting and passed.

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson