

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall
on Wednesday, 1st October, 2025 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 McAteer;
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, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly,
R.M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas,
Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,
Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, McCabe, McCallin,
McCann, McCormick, 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 read the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

There were no apologies received.

Declarations of Interest

Regarding the item 'Social Supermarket Fund' within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes of 19th September, Councillors P. Donnelly, Canavan, Duffy, Beattie, M. Doherty and Groogan declared interests in that they were associated with groups or organisations which had applied for within the terms of the fund.

Councillor de Faoite declared an interest in the item 'Planning Information' within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in that he was member of the Board of Governors of Forge Integrated Primary School.

Councillor Long declared an interest in the item 'Night Mover Service' within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th September, in that the service was funded by the Department of Justice, in respect of which his wife was the Justice Minister. Councillor R. McLaughlin declared an interest in this matter also as his partner was a Junior Minister within the Executive.

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In respect of the item 'Shared City Partnership' within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th September. Councillor Groogan declared an interest in the PEACEPLUS Programme item within the Partnership's minutes of 8th September in that her employer was in receipt of funding under the terms of the fund.

Since none of the aforementioned matters became the subject of discussion or debate, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.

Minutes of the Council

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Council of 1st September, 2025, be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, welcomed Councillor Luke Meenehan to his first meeting of the Council since his co-option as the replacement for the former Councillor Maskey. In addition, the Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, expressed condolences to Mr. Eunan McConville, Director of Communications, Marketing & External Affairs, on the passing of his mother. Finally, the Lord Mayor expressed condolences to the Royal Family on the death of The Duchess of Kent on 5th September.

The Lord Mayor congratulated the boxer Lewis Crocker on his winning of the International Boxing Federation's World Welterweight Title, when he defeated Paddy Donovan at Windsor Park on 13th September. The Council agreed that a civic reception be held to mark the achievement of Mr. Crocker.

Alderman McCoubrey paid tribute to Berlin Swifts F.C. on their winning of the McDonald's Irish FA Grassroots Football Awards Regional Club of the Year 2025, particularly the community-led work and dedication of the club's chairman, Mr. Jonathan McClelland. He paid tribute also to Mr. Brian Kirker who had been shortlisted for the People's Award at the aforementioned event for his long-standing work with the 22nd Old Boys F.C., particularly his work in community outreach, mental health awareness and cross-community initiatives. At Alderman McCoubrey's request, the Lord Mayor agreed to write to Mr. McClelland and Mr. Kirker to congratulate them on their achievements.

Alderman McCullough referred to the assassination in Utah on 10th September of the American political activist Mr. Charlie Kirk. At the request of Alderman McCullough, the Lord Mayor agreed to write to the wife and children of Mr. Kirk to express condolences on behalf of the City of Belfast.

Alderman Lawlor referred to the recent events which had taken place in the City to mark the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Irish Guards, particularly a Remembrance event which had taken place at the City Hall Cenotaph on 5th September, and the laying-up of the Regiment's Colours in St Mark's, Dundela,

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on 7th September. He expressed thanks to the Regiment for 125 years of service and commitment.

Alderman D. Douglas congratulated Council employee Mr. Kyle Smith on his winning debut on the undercard of the Lewis Crocker vs. Paddy Donovan contest at Windsor Park in September. He wished Mr. Smith every success in his career. In addition, Councillor M. Doherty paid tribute to Mr. S. McComb on his winning of the IBF European super-lightweight title in Sheffield when he had defeated the Welshman, Ben Crocker.

Councillor M. Donnelly referred to Bláthnaid Ní Mhaoilmheanna, a four-year-old child from West Belfast who was battling an aggressive brain tumour. He referred to the significant fundraising effort which was underway to enable her to travel to Germany for specialist immunotherapy treatment and wished Bláthnaid every success as she battled the illness.

Councillor de Faoite welcomed the expansion of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to Belfast, whereby the first 75 new-born children registered at the City Hall from 1st October would have the opportunity to avail of the book gifting scheme.

Councillor R. Brooks referred to the recent retirement of Mr. John McConnell, the former City Services Manager (Resources and Fleet) and thanked Mr. McConnell for his service to the Council and valuable assistance to Members over the past number of years. In addition, Councillor Brooks congratulated staff member Mr. Philip Purdie on his achievements with the Irish Senior Golf Team, which had recently won the European Senior Men's Team Championship and the Men's and Women's Senior Home International tournament.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Brennan,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th and 26th September, 2025, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.”

Amendment

Draft Irish Language Policy

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

“That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Committee of 26th September under the heading ‘Draft Irish Language Policy’ be amended to provide that this Council excludes staff uniforms from the Policy in terms of branding and corporate logo.”

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On a vote, seventeen Members voted in favour of the amendment and forty-two against and it was declared lost.

Adoption of Minutes

The Lord Mayor put the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Committee of the 19th and 26th September to the Council for adoption. As there was no consensus, the adoption of the minutes became subject to a vote.

On that vote, seventeen Members voted against the adoption of the minutes and forty-two for and, accordingly, the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Committee of the 19th and 26th September were adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

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

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 9th September, 2025, be approved and adopted.”

Amendment

Surveys for Dual Language Street Signs

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

“That the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 9th September, under the heading ‘Surveys for Dual Language Street Signs’, be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees that the period of time permitted to allow for the receipt of responses for dual language surveys be extended to 28 days.”

On a vote, twenty-eight Members voted in favour of the amendment and thirty against and it was declared lost.

Deputations – Stranmillis Neighbourhood Association

At the request of the Councillor McKeown, the Council agreed that the aforementioned minute be amended to reflect that, in addition to an invitation being extended to the Stranmillis Neighbourhood Association, an invitation to attend be extended also to the Friends of Botanic Gardens and the Rugby Road Residents' Association to attend the meeting 7th October to outline their views in relation to the Proposed Pilot Opening Hours Scheme.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the aforementioned amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 9th September were approved and adopted.

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Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

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

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 10th September, 2025, be approved and adopted.”

Vacant to Vibrant Programme

At the request of the Councillor de Faoite, the Council agreed that the aforementioned minute under the heading ‘Vacant to Vibrant Programme’ be amended to reflect that correspondence be forwarded to the Minister for the Economy and the Minister for Communities seeking additional funding to support the scheme.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the aforementioned amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 10th September were approved and adopted.

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Doran,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

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

Amendment

Notices of Motion – Update

Moved by Councillor McKeown
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite and

Resolved - That the decision of the Licensing Committee of 17th September, under the heading “Notices of Motion – Update”, insofar as it relates to the closure of the ‘Airbnb Accommodation’ motion, be amended to reflect the addition of the following after: “the Committee noted that the issues still remained and that the Committee would continue to receive regular updates in respect of the regulation of such accommodation” ... *“and that officers would undertake to arrange an all-Members’ ad hoc meeting/workshop to which appropriate officials from the Department for Infrastructure, Department for Communities, Department for the Economy and Tourism NI would be invited, to brief Members on their plans to address the issue and to enable Members to discuss such plans with them.”*

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Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the aforementioned amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 17th September were approved and adopted.

Minutes of Planning Committee

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

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

**Minutes of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.
Shareholders' Committee**

Moved by Councillor Hanvey,
Seconded by Councillor D. Douglas and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 15th September, 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 M. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite and

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

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor Flynn
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson and

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

Lord Mayor
Chairperson