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Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS



24th October, 2022

### STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in hybrid format, both in the Council Chamber and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday, 25th October, 2022 at 5.30 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

#### AGENDA:

2. (e) Rates Freeze (Pages 1 - 4)



# Agenda Item 2e



## STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Subje	ct:	Notice of Motion – Rates Freeze		
Date:		25th October, 2022		
Repor	ting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor		
Contact Officer:		Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer		
Restricted Reports				
Is this	report restricted?	Yes No X		
ı	If Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?		
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
	Sometime in th	ne future		
	Never			
Call-in	1			
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?				
1.0	Purpose of Repor	t/Summary of Main Issues		
1.1	To consider the No	tice of Motion received for the meeting of the Council on 1st November in		
	relation to a Rates	<u> </u>		
2.0	Recommendation			
2.1	The Committee sho	ould note that the motion should be referred, in the first instance, to the		
	Strategic Policy and	d Resources Committee.		
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3.0	Main Report		
	Key Issues		
3.1	The Committee will be aware Standing Orders 13 (m) to (r) as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 4th October is as follows:		
3.2	(m)	The Standards and Business Committee will have delegated authority to adopt or reject Notices of Motion. The Lord Mayor will indicate at the Council meeting those Notices of Motion that have been considered by the Standards and Business Committee and whether such Notices of Motion were rejected or adopted. In either case, the proposer only may speak on the issue at Council.	
	(n)	The Standards and Business Committee will refer all Notices of Motion directly to a standing committee when the matter to which the Notice of Motion refers falls within the remit of that committee. At Council, the Lord Mayor will indicate that the Notice of Motion was received and referred. There will be no speakers on such Notices of Motion at Council.	
	(0)	The Standards and Business Committee will refer Notices of Motion for consideration by full Council when the Notice of Motion relates to a strategic or constitutional matter.	
	(p)	The Standards and Business Committee will not have the power to amend the wording of any Notice of Motion that is being referred to the full Council for debate.	
	(q)	Any amendments to Notice of Motions to be proposed at the Council are to be furnished at least one day in advance of going to the full Council and will be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting.	
	(r)	In referring any matter to the full Council, the Standards and Business Committee may determine to restrict contributions to the debate in relation to any Notice of Motion to one per political party. At the Council meeting, the Lord Mayor will clearly indicate if the restriction applies.	
3.3	The following motion has been received:		
	Rates Freeze		
	"The Council recognises the impact the rising cost of living crisis will have on Council expenditure, and the pressure this will put on our existing budgets to deliver the same high quality services.  The Council also recognises the crisis we face will demand a heightened and increases response from local government.  At a time when many people are struggling to heat their homes, or put food on the table, the Council and its partner organisations must be adequately equipped to help navigate this crisis, and provide the increased support that is needed for those struggling.		
		the covid pandemic, local Councils were allocated a financial package to help nanage the additional pressures the pandemic presented.	

The cost-of-living crisis is a crisis on a similar magnitude and will require additional support to be provided to local Councils, to ensure they are adequately equipped to help mitigate the impact of this crisis on communities. The Council views any effort to increase rates as a response to these financial pressures as counter intuitive. Any move to increase rates during a cost-of-living crisis will only exacerbate problems for working class communities. It would lead to a further hike in already mounting household bills and could force more people into poverty. Council acknowledges the need to avoid another rates increase during the cost-ofliving crisis. As a first step toward avoiding this, the Council will write to Stormont Ministers, the Secretary of State, and the Treasury, urging them to support a financial package of additional funding to be allocated to local Councils to help them manage the cost-ofliving crisis. This Council also commits to writing to all other Councils across the north, asking them to adopt a similar position of calling for an increase of government support. This will help ensure all Councils are adequately equipped to provide support to communities, to pay fair wages to its employees, and deliver high quality services during the cost-of-living crisis." Proposer: Councillor Michael Collins Seconder: Councillor Matt Collins 3.4 The motion, amongst other things, calls upon the Council to introduce a rates freeze – as the setting of the rate is matter for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the motion should be referred to that Committee for consideration. **Financial and Resource Implications** 3.5 None associated with this report. **Equality or Good Relations Implications** 3.6 None. 4.0 **Documents Attached** None.

