

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



**Belfast
City Council**

20th November, 2025

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall and remotely via MS Teams on Thursday, 20th November, 2025 at 5.30 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest
- (d) Schedule of Meetings 2026 (Pages 1 - 4)

2. Motions

- (a) Notice of Motion - Provision of Sustainable Burial Options (Pages 5 - 8)
- (b) Notice of Motion - Priority for our Local Traders (Pages 9 - 12)
- (c) Notice of Motion - Armed Forces Covenant - **withdrawn**
- (d) Notice of Motion - Definition of Victim (Pages 13 - 16)

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Subject:	Schedule of Meetings 2026
Date:	20th November, 2025
Reporting Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
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Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	To advise the Committee of the dates and times of the meetings of the Standards and Business Committee between January and November, 2026.
2.0	Recommendations
	The Committee is requested to approve the schedule of meetings for the Committee as outlined.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The monthly meeting of the Standards and Business Committee is normally held at 5.30 p.m. at the end of each month, before the Council meeting.
3.2	However, due to holiday periods and the timing of the monthly Council meetings and, in order to assist with the decision-making process, it has been necessary on occasions to move some of the meetings to earlier in the month.
3.3	Accordingly, the following dates have been identified for meetings of the Standards and Business Committee for the period from January to November, 2026: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, 6th January at 5.30 pm; • Tuesday, 27th January at 5.30 pm; • Tuesday, 24th February at 5.30 pm; • Tuesday, 24th March at 5.30 pm; • Tuesday, 28th April at 5.30 pm; • Tuesday, 26th May at 5.30 pm; • Tuesday, 23rd June at 5.30 pm; • Tuesday, 25th August at 5.30 pm; • Tuesday, 22nd September at 5.30 pm; • Tuesday, 27th October at 5.30 pm; and • Tuesday, 24h November at 5.30 pm.
3.4	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> None associated with this report.

3.5	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – None associated with this report.

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Subject:	Notice of Motion – Provision of Sustainable Burial Options
Date:	20th November, 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

Restricted Reports									
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Call-in <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>									
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>								

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider the Notice of Motion received for the meeting of the Council on 1st December, 2025 in relation to Provision of Sustainable Burial Options.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>Members are asked to note that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure or falls within the remit of a particular Committee must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.</p> <p>At this time Members are only asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that a subsequent report will be brought to Committee, if that Committee so agrees, outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to note that this motion will be referred on the first instance to the People and Communities Committee.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Committee will be aware that Standing Orders 13 (m) to (r), as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (m) <i>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.</i> (n) <i>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.</i> (o) <i>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.</i> (p) <i>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.</i> (q) <i>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.</i>

	<p>(r) <i>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.</i></p>
3.2	<p>The following motion has been received:</p> <p><u>Provision of sustainable burial options</u></p> <p>“That this Council recognises the significant environmental impact of traditional burial and cremation practices, including high carbon emissions, chemical pollution, and long-term land use challenges, as highlighted in the All-Party Group on Climate Action’s briefing paper “Beyond Burial and Cremation”.</p> <p>This Council further acknowledges the growing public interest in more sustainable, dignified, and low-carbon alternatives to conventional practices – such as natural (green) burials, tree pod interment, and other emerging end-of-life methods.</p> <p>Natural burial, which involves the use of biodegradable materials, avoids embalming, and often takes place in woodland or meadow settings with minimal ongoing maintenance, has already been successfully implemented elsewhere as a simple and ecologically restorative option.</p> <p>Accordingly, this Council agrees to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore the feasibility of providing sustainable burial options within existing or new cemeteries, including the designation of natural burial grounds or woodland burial areas within our district; and 2. Provide an update report on any identified legislative, planning, infrastructural, or regulatory barriers that may impact the delivery of these sustainable end-of-life options locally. “ <p>Proposer: Councillor Hedley Abernethy</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor Tara Brooks</p>
3.3	<p>The motion calls upon the Council to explore the feasibility of providing sustainable burial options within existing or new cemeteries – the responsibility for cemeteries and burial provision sits with the People and Communities Committee - the motion will therefore be referred to that Committee.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>

4.0	Documents Attached
	None.



Subject:	Notice of Motion – Priority for our Local Traders
Date:	20th November, 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

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Call-in									
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>								

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider the Notice of Motion received for the meeting of the Council on 1st December, 2025 in relation to Priority for our Local Trades.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>Members are asked to note that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure or falls within the remit of a particular Committee must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.</p> <p>At this time Members are only asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that a subsequent report will be brought to Committee, if that Committee so agrees, outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to note that this motion will be referred on the first instance to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Committee will be aware that Standing Orders 13 (m) to (r), as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, are as follows:</p> <p>(m) <i>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.</i></p> <p>(n) <i>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.</i></p> <p>(o) <i>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.</i></p> <p>(p) <i>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.</i></p> <p>(q) <i>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.</i></p>

	<p>(r) <i>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.</i></p>
3.2	<p>The following motion has been received:</p> <p><u>Priority for our local traders</u></p> <p>“This Council notes the significant contribution that local independent traders, small businesses, and market stallholders make to Belfast’s economy, tourism offering and community life.</p> <p>This Council further notes that major Council organised events such as the Belfast Maritime Festival, Christmas Market, and other seasonal events attract large crowds and generate substantial commercial opportunities.</p> <p>Accordingly, this Council resolves that for all Belfast City Council organised or Council supported events involving trader or vendor pitches, priority shall be given to traders who are residents or ratepayers within the Belfast City Council area.</p> <p>Council officers should develop and publish a transparent process for allocating pitches which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives first refusal to eligible local traders before any external operators are invited; • ensures fair opportunity across different sectors and communities; and • supports the Council’s commitment to local economic growth and inclusive prosperity.” <p>Proposer: Councillor Jordan Doran</p> <p>Seconder: Alderman Frank McCoubrey</p>
3.3	<p>The motion calls upon the Council to give priority to traders who are residents or ratepayer within the Belfast City Council area at Council organised or Council supported events involving trader or vendor pitches – the responsibility for these events lies with the City Growth and Regeneration Committee - the motion will therefore be referred to that Committee.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
4.0	<p>Documents Attached</p>

	None.
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Subject:	Notice of Motion – Definition of Victim
Date:	20th November, 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

Restricted Reports									
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Call-in									
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>								

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider the Notice of Motion received for the meeting of the Council on 1st December, 2025 in relation to Definition of Victim.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the motion and agree to either adopt the motion, refer it for debate at the Council meeting (with or without restrictions) or reject the motion.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	<p>The Committee will be aware that Standing Orders 13 (m) to (r), as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (m) <i>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.</i> (n) <i>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.</i> (o) <i>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.</i> (p) <i>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.</i> (q) <i>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.</i> (r) <i>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.</i>
3.2	<p>The following motion has been received:</p> <p><u>Notice of Motion – Definition of Victim</u></p> <p>“Belfast City Council (hereinafter “this Council”) expresses deep concern that the definition of victim within the <i>Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006</i> fails to distinguish between those who perpetrated wrongdoing during the Troubles and the innocent victims whom they harmed, injured, killed, or bereaved.</p>

	<p>This Council further notes that many of those innocent victims and their families live within Belfast, rely on Belfast-based victim support services, and remain directly affected by how such definitions are applied in practice.</p> <p>This Council believes that innocent victims should not be required to engage with terrorists or their supporters when accessing victim-support services; asserts that there is no moral equivalence between victim-makers and innocent victims; and welcomes the fact that the Victims' Pension legislation makes a clear and necessary distinction between perpetrator and victim.</p> <p>This Council condemns the SDLP and, in particular, the Alliance Party for supporting the Sinn Féin amendment in a recent Assembly motion on the legacy of the past — an amendment which deliberately removed the word “innocent” from the description of a victim and intentionally blurred the line between perpetrator and victim.</p> <p>Accordingly, this Council resolves to write to the Justice Minister expressing serious concern regarding her publicly stated view that some terrorist perpetrators may also be considered victims, and to request that she clarify those comments and offer an apology to innocent victims who have been distressed by them, including those here in Belfast.”</p> <p>Proposer: Alderman Dean A. McCullough</p> <p>Seconder: Alderman James Lawlor</p>
3.3	<p>The motion calls upon the Council to write to the Justice Minister as set out above the Committee can either adopt the motion, refer it for debate at the Council meeting (with or without restrictions) or reject the motion.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	None.

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