

Council

SPECIAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held Remotely via Microsoft Teams on Monday, 10th August, 2020 immediately following the special meeting which commenced at 6.00p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey) (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner);
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford;
Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Black, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Groves, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAllister, McAteer, McCullough, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, Newton, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt and Walsh.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McCusker) and Councillors Michael Collins, Ferguson, McDonough-Brown, Nicholl and Whyte.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Motion

Establishment of an Independent Commission

In accordance with notice on the agenda, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie.

Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

"In recent months our Party have received complaints from staff relating to harassment and bullying from Councillors and Political Parties. We recognise that all staff are owed a duty of care and that operating in a

political environment does not change that fundamental legal requirement. We recognise that staff may be more fearful raising concerns because of the environment in which they work. There is no place for this behaviour in democratic society in which people's dignity and human rights should be protected. With this in mind, we call upon the Council to establish an independent commission to examine this issue and report the findings and make recommendations to ensure the protection of our staff."

Amendment

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Alderman Dorrian,

"This Council agrees that any incident of harassment, bullying or intimidation of staff by any member of Council, or a party group on the Council, is a serious matter and is unacceptable conduct; agrees to remind staff of the procedures which exist for the reporting of any such incident; and agrees to remind Councillors of their responsibility to ensure that they behave appropriately towards staff at all times and act within The Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors."

The Council voted on the amendment, when 31 Members voted for and 18 against, with 4 no votes and it was declared carried.

The amendment was put as the substantive motion and agreed.

Chairperson