

Council

Tuesday, 4th May, 2021

Meeting of Council

Members present: Councillor ; and
Councillors McCoubrey, McCusker, Long, Copeland, Dorrian, Kingston, Haire, Rodgers, Sandford, Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Collins, CollinsMichael, Corr, Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, Kelly, Kyle, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAllister, McAteer, McCabe, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, Newton, Nicholl, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt, Verner, Walsh and Whyte

In attendance:

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Cobain and M. Kelly.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor T. Kelly declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "Assets Management", on the basis that her husband was employed by the Greater Village Regeneration Trust.

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in respect of the motions on Immediate need to tackle the waiting lists for diagnosing autism in children, Mater Hospital Services, and Pay Rise for Public Sector Workers in so far as he was an employee of the Public Health Agency and left the meeting whilst the matters were under consideration.

Councillor Walsh declared an interest to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "James Connolly Heritage Trail Sign" on the basis that he was involved in the James Connolly Heritage Trail initiative but remained in the meeting as the matter did not become the subject of discussion.

Alderman Copeland declared an interest in the Motion "Mater Hospital Services" in that her son was an employee of the Trust, and left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

Councillor Lyons declared an interest in respect of the motion 7.f) Pay Rise for Public Sector Workers, in so far as he was Vice Chair of Libraries NI. The High Sheriff, Councillor Long and Councillor Smyth also declared an interest in Item 7.f) in that they

were an employee in the Public Sector. The City Solicitor confirmed that they did not need to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

The following Members declared an interest in respect of an item contained within the minutes of the People and Communities Committee, under the heading “Community Provision Grant Funding Approach 2021/22”, on the basis that they worked for or were associated with the organisations listed, but remained in the meeting as the matter did not become the subject of discussion:

- Councillor Verner - Greater Shankill Partnership;
- Councillor Black - Grosvenor Community Centre;
- Councillor Beattie - Blackie River Community Group;
- Councillor Canavan - Blackie River Community Group, and the Greater Shankill Partnership Board;
- Alderman Kingston - Forward South Partnership and Greater Shankill Partnership Board;
- Councillor Hutchinson - Greater Shankill Partnership Board;
- Councillor McCabe - Féile an Phobail; and
- Alderman Copeland - on the basis that her daughter was a Director of the Greater Village Regeneration Trust.

Councillor Murphy declared an interest to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading “Motion on Funding for the Citywide Tribunal Service”, on the basis that he was on the Board of the Ligoniel Improvement Association, which hosted the Tribunal Service but remained in the meeting as the matter did not become the subject of discussion.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey),
Seconded by Councillor Pankhurst and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 1st and special meeting of 12th April be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

Condolences

The Lord Mayor, together with a number of Members, extended their condolences to Councillor Heading on the recent death of his father.

Congratulations

The Lord Mayor extended, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Councillor M. Kelly and her family on the recent birth of their daughter Charlotte.

Councillor Brooks congratulated the Northern Ireland Women’s Football Team on reaching the 2022 European Championship Finals. The Lord Mayor confirmed that he would be meeting with representatives shortly to offer the Council’s best wishes.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Councillor Pankhurst acknowledged that the Centenary of Northern Ireland had taken place on 3rd May. The Lord Mayor advised that he had, earlier in the day, launched a time capsule and had welcomed school children from Belfast to send in ideas for objects to be included.

Councillor Dorrian pointed out that the evening of 4th May marked the 80th Anniversary of the fire raid on Belfast during the Belfast Blitz and highlighted the fact that Harland and Wolfe and the Connswater Greenway were marking the occasion this evening.

Councillor O'Hara welcomed the opening of retail and hospitality in Belfast and expressed his thanks to staff for the work involved in the reopening of the City Centre.

Minutes

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Black,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Medium Term Financial Plan/Commercial Plan

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, under the heading "Medium Term Financial Plan/Commercial Plan", be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees to reject the Commercial Plan.

On a recorded vote, thirty Members voted for the amendment and twenty-six against and it was declared carried.

<u>For 30</u>	<u>Against 26</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCusker; Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, O'Hara, Smyth, and Walsh.	The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Hanvey, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, McAllister, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Nicholl, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner.

Amendment 1

**Standards and Business Committee –
Draft Terms of Reference**

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, under the heading "Standards and Business Committee – Draft Terms of Reference", be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees not to proceed with plans for a Standards and Business Committee, and instead asks officers to investigate a more democratic means for dealing with both matters.

On a recorded vote, twenty Members voted for the amendment and thirty-two against and it was declared lost.

<u>For 20</u>	<u>Against 32</u>	<u>No Vote 4</u>
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The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCusker; The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, De Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Harvey, Heading, Lyons, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Nicholl, O'Hara, Smyth,	The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Hussey, T. Kelly, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.	Aldermen Copeland and Rodgers; and Councillors Hutchinson and Kyle.

Amendment 2

**Standards and Business Committee –
Draft Terms of Reference**

Moved by Councillor McAllister,
Seconded by High Sheriff, Councillor Long,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, under the heading “Standards and Business Committee – Draft Terms of Reference”, be amended and, accordingly, the Council agrees to remove the Business Committee element as outlined in the report and agrees to the Standards Committee only.

On a recorded vote, twenty-one Members voted for the amendment and thirty-four against, with 2 No Votes, and it was declared lost.

<u>For 21</u>	<u>Against 34</u>	<u>No Vote 2</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCusker; The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, De Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Harvey, Heading, Howard, Lyons, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Nicholl, O'Hara, Smyth.	The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Rodgers, Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Hussey, T. Kelly, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.	Councillors Hutchinson and Kyle.

Amendment 3

**Standards and Business Committee –
Draft Terms of Reference**

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor O’Hara,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, under the heading “Standards and Business Committee – Draft Terms of Reference”, be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees in line with our Constitution that states that ‘the Full Council is the over-arching decision-making body’, this Council does not agree that the Standards and Business Committee should have delegated authority over any matter. Decisions of this Committee should be subject to ratification at full Council like any other Committee. As such the Terms and References for this Committee should be amended to reflect this and brought back to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

On a recorded vote, twenty-four Members voted for the amendment and thirty-four against and it was declared lost.

<u>For 24</u>	<u>Against 34</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCusker; The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, De Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hutchinson, Kyle, Lyons, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Nicholl, O’Hara, Smyth and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Hussey, T. Kelly, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.

Amendment 4

**Standards and Business Committee –
Draft Terms of Reference**

Moved by Councillor Michael Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, under the heading “Standards and Business Committee – Draft Terms of Reference”, be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees to seek outside legal advice to re-examine the issue.

On a recorded vote, twenty Members voted for the amendment and thirty-six against and it was declared lost.

<u>For 20</u>	<u>Against 36</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCusker; The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, De Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Lyons, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, Mulholland, O’Hara, Smyth and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Rodgers, Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.

Amendment 1

Malone House – Options Paper

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor McAteer,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, under the heading “Malone House – Options Paper”, be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees to opt for option 4, which will include an investment plan, business case and economic appraisal to retain Malone House in house and invest in the assist to bring Malone House to a sustainable model.

The proposer agreed, at the request of Councillor Matt Collins, to amend his proposal to provide for the following addition to end of the proposal: ***“Furthermore this Council will bring in/retain the catering services as an in house model.”***

After discussion, the following proposal, as amended, was put to the meeting:

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, under the heading “Malone House – Options Paper”, be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees to opt for option 4, which will include an investment plan, business case and economic appraisal to retain Malone House in house and invest in the assist to bring Malone House to a sustainable model. Furthermore this Council will bring in/retain the catering services as in house model.

On a recorded vote, 25 Members voted for the amendment and 33 against and it was declared lost.

<u>For 25</u>	<u>Against 33</u>
Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley,	The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor

<p>Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McLaughlin, Murphy, O'Hara, Smyth, and Walsh.</p>	<p>McCusker; The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, De Faoite, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons, McAllister, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Nicholl, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner and Whyte.</p>
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Amendment 2

Malone House – Options Paper

Moved by Councillor Matt Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, under the heading “Malone House – Options Paper”, be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees to opt for option 2 as outlined in the report.

On a recorded vote, 25 Members voted for the amendment and 33 against and it was declared lost.

<u>For 25</u>	<u>Against 33</u>
<p>Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McLaughlin, Murphy, O'Hara, Smyth, and Walsh.</p>	<p>The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCusker; The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, De Faoite, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons, McAllister, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Nicholl, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner and Whyte.</p>

Malone House – Options Paper

At the request of Councillor Beattie, the Council agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to provide an update on the Trade Union engagement in relation to the matter.

Peace Plus 2021-2027 Consultation

(Content/Administration)

At the request of Councillor Kyle, the Council agreed to amend the minute of the meeting of 23rd April, under the above mentioned heading, to provide that the Council's draft consultation response ([appendix 2](#)) be amended under Theme 2 - Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation, in that the answer to "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas Programme Areas Skills Development"? be affirmed that the Council agrees with the proposal for support.

Amendment

Revised Dual Language Street Signs Policy

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor McCullough,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, under the heading "Revised Dual Language Street Signs Policy", be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees not to approve the draft policy so that the Committee can reconsider the threshold before consultation takes place.

On a vote, 18 Members voted for the amendment and 40 against and it was declared lost.

Update on Smart Belfast

At the request of Councillor Gormley, the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the intended programme outlined in the report to reduce digital exclusion would be used for digital infrastructure only. However, other funds were available to improve digital skills or assist with hardware provision.

Amendment

Heritage Trail Sign Policy – City Hall

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

"That the Council provides a combined sign for Heritage Trails wishing to associate with the City Hall, and their QR codes, on the external railings of the City Hall. This will be an inclusive approach, accommodating between four and eight trails, and will ensure that the codes are always accessible, including when the City Hall grounds are closed, and avoid cluttering the view of the façade of the City Hall, which is a Grade A listed building.

On a recorded vote, 18 Members voted for the amendment and 40 against and it was declared lost.

<u>For 18</u>	<u>Against 40</u>
The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and	The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCusker;

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<p>Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, McCullough, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner.</p>	<p>Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAllister, McAteer, McCabe, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, Nicholl, O'Hara, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.</p>
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Amendment

Council/Committee Meetings - Post 6th May, 2021

The City Solicitor explained that the purposed arrangements for holding Council/Committee meetings could no longer continue following the expiry of the legislation permitting the hosting of remote meetings from 6th May.

He reminded the Council that, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting in April, had agreed to change Standing Orders, as set out in the report, to enable the current arrangements for the hosting of remote meetings to continue. He explained, however, that this was no longer a viable option, as the legal proceedings undertaken by the ADSO and LLG, in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council, seeking a declaration to allow for the continuation of local authority meetings beyond 6th May had, following the decision by the High Court in England on 28th April, been unsuccessful.

He advised that the Council needed to provide direction on how it wished to undertake its decision-making process beyond 6th May and suggested an option to hold remote meetings and the use of Delegated Authority. He explained that the Council could continue to host remote meetings, with the Members of each Committee considering the issues within its remit and making recommendations to the Chief Executive or appropriate Chief Officer to exercise delegated authority to implement the recommendations.

He circulated the following information which outlined the proposed temporary change in process arrangements for consideration:

- 1. Up to one week in advance of the meeting an agenda will be issued as normal.**
- 2. Each Committee will continue to meet, in a remote setting, with the public present for those items which do not have restricted information, to consider reports and recommendations as at present.**
- 3. As the Committee will not be a 'formal' decision-making body, it will be convened as, for example, "a meeting of the Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee". The purpose of the meeting will be for the Members of that Committee to meet and make recommendations to the Chief Executive to use her delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 41 to implement the recommendations.**
- 4. The same rules of debate contained in Standing Orders will still apply to these meetings.**
- 5. All recommendations to the Chief Executive will be by unanimous or majority decision.**
- 6. Following the meeting, Democratic Services will produce a "Recommendations Register", similar to the current decision register. This will be forwarded to the Chief Executive the day**

immediately following the committee meeting. It will advise of any agenda items where votes were taken and also highlight any areas of concern or contentious matters that might have been raised.

- 7. The Chief Executive's Decision Register, for those decisions taken under delegated authority, will be issued to all Members of the Council, in accordance with the call-in procedure.*
- 8. A full minute of the meeting will also be produced by Democratic Services as per the usual procedures.*
- 9. The full Council will also operate on the same principles.*
- 10. Prior to the Council meeting, an agenda will be issued with the list of decisions from each of the Committee memberships, with the full minute of the meeting appended.*
- 11. The Council will discuss each of the Chief Executive's decisions, similar to how the minutes are presented at present and consider whether or not it wishes to ratify the decisions.*
- 12. Following the Council meeting, a register of decisions will be issued, which will be subject to the call-in procedure.*
- 13. No decisions will be implemented until the call-in period has expired.*
- 14. For those decisions in respect of which the Chief Executive has a conflict of interest or which have a political sensitivity she may decline to exercise delegated authority. Such decisions will be deferred until governance arrangements can be resumed or if necessary due to urgency through a physically convened meeting.*
- 15. The delegated authority arrangement will exclude matters referred to at section 7 (3) of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 which are reserved to Council.*

The Chief Executive highlighted that, if agreed, these procedures would be put in place as a temporary measure and the ability to hold hybrid meetings, that is, a combination of remote and in-person meetings, would continue to be examined in line with Health and Safety guidelines.

She pointed out that the Council would continue to advocate for the introduction of new legislation with the Executive Office to allow for remote attendance at Committee meetings on a permanent basis.

After discussion, the Council agreed the new governance process as set out and noted that the process would be kept under review.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd April, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Baker,
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 13th April be approved and adopted.

Response from Department for Communities – Affordable Warmth Update

At the request of Councillor Heading, the Council agreed to communicate to the Minister for Communities its disappointment in relation to the rules outlined in her response which prevented the underspend of the Affordable Warmth Scheme in 2020-2021 being ring-fenced for the use of the scheme and carried over into the next financial year and it was unfortunate that this underspend could not be or reallocated to those in need.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 13th April, 2021, were approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor T. Kelly and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 14th April, be approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 21st April, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Hussey,
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 20th April, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Brexit Committee

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh and

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 15th April be approved and adopted.

Motions

Equality for LGBTQI+ Community

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Maskey proposed the following amendment to his motion:

“This Council recognises the struggle for equality by generations of people who identify as LGBTQI+; acknowledges the successful work of LGBTQI+ activists in eradicating elements of institutionalised discrimination and condemns the continued inequalities experienced by those who identify as LGBTQI+.

We endorse in full the recommendations of the LGBTQI+ advisory panel and welcome the timeframe for the LGBTQI+ strategy (December 2021).

This Council calls on all Ministers and Departments with responsibility to proactively and robustly implement all elements of the LGBTQI+ strategy, including with adequate resourcing and funding.

We call on the Executive to commit to equality, respect and human rights for all sections of our society in its actions, words and deeds.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor O’Hara.

After discussion, the motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Immediate need to tackle the waiting lists for diagnosing autism in children

(Councillor Mulholland left the meeting whilst the motion was being discussed.)

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor McAteer proposed:

“Autism can cause significant social, communication and behavioural difficulties. The number of school age children with autism has soared in recent years. A total of 2,562 children were diagnosed as on the autistic spectrum last year across the north of Ireland. Five years previously the figure was 1,472. Children from social and economically disadvantaged

backgrounds are more likely to have autism - with boys three times more likely to be diagnosed than girls.

However, in Belfast thousands of children with suspected autism are waiting up to two years to get a diagnosis from the Belfast Trust. Early diagnosis and intervention is key to the future of these children and parents are distressed that valuable time is being lost while their children remain on waiting lists.

Many parents have had no option but to pay for private assessments which cost circa £1,400. All 5 of the norths health trusts now accept private referrals and this is leading to concerns about a two-tier health system that will see children from disadvantaged backgrounds left further down the waiting lists.

This Council asserts that, whilst the pandemic has affected autism services, all children with autism deserve to have timely assessments and the vital support they need at the earliest possible stage in their development. This Council will write to the Minister for Health to ask him to take all steps necessary to immediately tackle the unacceptable waiting lists for diagnosis of autism in children and to provide the necessary supports and interventions for their development.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Magennis.

The proposer agreed, at the request of Councillor Verner, to amend her motion to provide for the addition of the following wording to the end of the final paragraph:

“Furthermore, this Council also commits to doing everything we can to ensure that we play our role in providing safe, appropriate and inclusive services and facilities for children with autism”.

The proposed amended motion, as set out hereunder, was put to the meeting:

“Autism can cause significant social, communication and behavioural difficulties. The number of school age children with autism has soared in recent years. A total of 2,562 children were diagnosed as on the autistic spectrum last year across the north of Ireland. Five years previously the figure was 1,472. Children from social and economically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have autism - with boys three times more likely to be diagnosed than girls.

However, in Belfast thousands of children with suspected autism are waiting up to two years to get a diagnosis from the Belfast Trust. Early diagnosis and intervention is key to the future of these children and parents are distressed that valuable time is being lost while their children remain on waiting lists.

Many parents have had no option but to pay for private assessments which cost circa £1,400. All 5 of the norths health trusts now accept private referrals and this is leading to concerns about a two-tier health system that will see children from disadvantaged backgrounds left further down the waiting lists.

This Council asserts that, whilst the pandemic has affected autism services, all children with autism deserve to have timely assessments and the vital support they need at the earliest possible stage in their development. This Council will write to the Minister for Health to ask him to take all steps necessary to immediately tackle the unacceptable waiting lists for diagnosis of autism in children and to provide the necessary supports and interventions for their development.

Furthermore, this Council also commits to doing everything we can to ensure that we play our role in providing safe, appropriate and inclusive services and facilities for children with autism”.

After discussion, the motion, as amended, was put to the Council and passed.

Charges for the Use of ATMs

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Brian Heading proposed:

“This Council notes increase in commercial (non-bank) ATMS in convenience stores and in our high streets. The Council further notes the financial charge made against the consumer for withdrawing their own cash from their own bank account can range from 75 pence to £1.25 per withdrawal.

The Council understands the need of people to be able to access cash while acknowledging the pandemic impact on the use of cash in circulating in the local economy.

This Council also notes that those on fixed incomes face a financial charge to withdraw small amounts of cash, usually for necessities, and this is an unnecessary financial burden on older people and families.

The Council therefore will write to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) urging them to cap the number of ATMS that charge for withdrawing cash. The Council will also ask the FCA to check on behalf of consumers, how such ATMS are sited and criteria applied and if there is any correlation between the siting of cash ATMs which charge in areas of social deprivation on the grounds they may be used more often in a 7 day period by people on fixed incomes and are therefore more profitable.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Donal Lyons.

After discussion, the motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Standing Order 23

The Council’s attention was drawn to the fact that, in accordance with Standing Order 23, any meeting of the Council which has lasted continuously for five hours shall stand adjourned unless the Council shall by resolution decide to continue sitting.

Resolved – That the Council agrees to continue to sit to consider the remaining business.

Mater Hospital Services

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Ferguson proposed:

“This Council recognises the role played by healthcare staff in the Mater Hospital, on the front line of the pandemic. While working hard to battle COVID at a local level, these staff saw their normal workday overhauled and many worked multiple redeployments. The Council thanks the staff at the Mater Hospital for their efforts.

The Council notes that the Mater Hospital is an incredibly important asset for North Belfast, both as an employer and in terms of services provision. Further notes the concerns that no timeline has been provided for the return of Mater Hospital services which were removed to facilitate COVID operations; including general surgery, ICU, day procedures, mental health services, births, and more.

Along with Unison, the Council agrees that all services which were removed during the pandemic should be returned to the Mater as soon as is reasonably possible, and that staff and trade unions should be provided with a working timeline for this to take place.

Therefore, the Council will seek a cross party meeting with Cathy Jack and a representative from the Department of Health to discuss plans for the future of the Mater, after COVID.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Matt Collins.

The proposer agreed, at the request of Councillor Whyte, to amend her proposal to the wording of the final paragraph as follows: ***“Therefore, the Council will seek a cross party meeting with Cathy Jack and the Minister for Health Robin Swann MLA to discuss plans for the future of the Mater, after Covid.”***

The proposed amended motion as set out hereunder, was put to the meeting:

“This Council recognises the role played by healthcare staff in the Mater Hospital, on the front line of the pandemic. While working hard to battle COVID at a local level, these staff saw their normal workday overhauled and many worked multiple redeployments. The Council thanks the staff at the Mater Hospital for their efforts.

The Council notes that the Mater Hospital is an incredibly important asset for North Belfast, both as an employer and in terms of services provision. Further notes the concerns that no timeline has been provided for the return of Mater Hospital services which were removed to facilitate COVID operations; including general surgery, ICU, day procedures, mental health services, births, and more.

Along with Unison, the Council agrees that all services which were removed during the pandemic should be returned to the Mater as soon as is reasonably possible, and that staff and trade unions should be provided with a working timeline for this to take place.

Therefore, the Council will seek a cross party meeting with Cathy Jack and the Minister for Health Robin Swann MLA to discuss plans for the future of the Mater, after Covid.”

After discussion, the motion, as amended, was put to the Council and passed.

Ban Conversion Therapy

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Flynn proposed:

“This Council supports calls for a ban on the harmful practice commonly referred to as conversion therapy.

The Council acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the Ban Conversion Therapy NI coalition, made up of LGBTQ+ organisations, mental health charities and faith groups which are united in calling for this ban.

The Council notes the 'Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK' which describes this practice as unethical, potentially harmful and not supported by evidence.

Further notes the Association of Christian Counsellors' stance regarding conversion therapy, which states that Reparative (or Conversion) Therapy does not fit within the ACC Ethics and Practice framework.

The Council agrees that it is fundamentally wrong to view minority sexual orientation or gender identity as something that needs fixed or cured - and that any practice, including religious practice, that is conducted with a specific pre-determined outcome, such as changing or suppressing a person sexual orientation or gender identity, is harmful and denigrating, and must be banned.

This Council will therefore write to the Minister for Communities on the following;

- To support a legislative ban on conversion therapy in all its forms, before the end of the current assembly mandate.
- That there should be no special exemptions for religious organisations in implementing a ban on conversion therapy.
- That any ban should clearly distinguish from safe and supportive therapies, delivered by suitable qualified and regulated professionals, that assist people to explore and better understand their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor de Faoite.

The Council agreed to a recorded vote on the motion, when 40 Members voted for the motion and 3 against, with 11 No votes, and it was declared carried:

<u>For 40</u>	<u>Against 3</u>	<u>No Vote 11</u>
The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); Alderman Copeland, Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Kyle, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAllister, McAteer, McCabe, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, Nicholl, O’Hara, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.	Councillors Brooks, T. Kelly and McCullough.	The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, and Sandford; and Councillors Bunting, Hussey, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner.

Pay Rise for Public Sector Workers

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Michael Collins proposed:

“This Council notes the disappointing pay offer of a 1% non-consolidated pay increase for public sector workers. Given levels of inflation this amounts to a pay cut, and goes nowhere near far enough to reward workers for the valuable work they have carried out over the last 13 months of the pandemic. This offer is a slap in the face to staff and falls abysmally short of a fair and just pay offer.

This decision will unfairly impact thousands of staff across the civil service, as well as employees of the Education Authority, Health and Social Services bodies and HSC Trusts, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Local Government, Libraries NI and a number of other public bodies and voluntary organisations.

NIPSA, the main trade union representing public sector workers, has stated its opposition to this offer, and is engaging in a consultation period with members urging them to engage in industrial action to resist it.

The Council supports the trade unions in their calls to reject this offer and demands a fair pay rise for public sector workers.

Any pay rise must be fully consolidated, as has been the case with staff in other regions of the UK, such as the Department for Work and Pensions in Britain whose staff received a 2.5% consolidated offer. There should be no continued pay disparity between staff in the north compared to those in Britain and staff here must be afforded the same incremental pay increases as other regions.

This Council resolves write to the Minister for Finance, Conor Murphy, urging him to go back to the negotiating table with a better offer. The Council also resolves to convene a meeting with NIPSA and the relevant trade unions to discuss how the Council, as a local government body, can assist the trade unions in their campaign for a fair pay deal for public sector workers.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Matt Collins

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh,

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor Michael Collins and seconded by Councillor Matt Collins be amended as **follows**:

“This Council welcomes the pay offer representing a 4.8% increase in the civil service pay bill over 2 years agreed by all parties in the Northern Executive;

Notes the pay freeze imposed on civil servants by the British Government and the standstill budget provided to the Northern Executive during a period of financial hardship for many;

Further notes the budget provided by the British Government which included a mere 1% increase for healthcare workers amounts to a slap in the face for those that have worked so valiantly during the ongoing pandemic;

Commits to write to the British Government asking them to review their budget allocation to the Executive and to stress to them the need for multi-year budgets with adequate resources to fund much needed pay increases to our health and social care and public sector staff.”

The Council agreed to vote on the amendment to the motion, when forty-five Members voted for the motion and seven against and it was declared carried.

The following amended motion was thereupon put to the meeting as the substantive motion and passed:

“This Council welcomes the pay offer representing a 4.8% increase in the civil service pay bill over 2 years agreed by all parties in the Northern Executive;

Notes the pay freeze imposed on civil servants by the British Government and the standstill budget provided to the Northern Executive during a period of financial hardship for many;

Further notes the budget provided by the British Government which included a mere 1% increase for healthcare workers amounts to a slap in the face for those that have worked so valiantly during the ongoing pandemic;

Commits to write to the British Government asking them to review their budget allocation to the Executive and to stress to them the need for multi-year budgets with adequate resources to fund much needed pay increases to our health and social care and public sector staff.”

Standing Order 13(f)

During debate on the previous motion, the Council’s attention was drawn to the fact that the time was approaching 12.20 a.m.

Proposal

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh,

Resolved – That the Council agreed that the remainder of the Motions, as set out in the agenda, would be referred, without presentation or discussion to the Committee’s noted below, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f).

Statue of Mary Ann McCracken

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Long proposed:

“This Council resolves to install a statue of Mary Ann McCracken in the grounds of City Hall.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Nicholl.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Extension of the Belfast Bikes Scheme

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Baker proposed:

“This Council:

Acknowledges the record-breaking month for the use of Belfast Bikes, with 30k journeys made in March this year, and commends once again the scheme and our officials working on it.

Recognises that it must continue to promote and invest in the positive environmental, economic and social benefits of cycling and pedestrianisation throughout our city.

Calls on Council officers to carry out a scoping exercise to examine the further extension of Belfast bikes, beyond the city core and further out into communities across the city.

Agrees to write to the Infrastructure Minister Nicola Mallon to reiterate the need for working in support of investment into the required protected cycle lane network in our city and communities, to support the further rollout of the Belfast Bikes Scheme extending its reach and accessibility throughout the city.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McAteer.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

War Years Remembered

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Pankhurst proposed:

“This Council notes the priceless and globally renowned work of War Years Remembered as well as the impact COVID-19 has had on the museum.

Consequently, given the importance of not only preserving our social and military history as well as offering educational lessons that offer excellent ways of building bridges between communities, including ethnic minorities, this Council agrees to engage with War Years Remembered on finding a suitable solution to their current struggles, including a proposed relocation to Belfast.

This Council agrees that such a move would be beneficial not only to our city’s economy and attractiveness through local tourism, but also through the provision of education to our schools, colleges and local community groups.”

The motion was seconded by Alderman Copeland.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Recent Violence and Public Disorder

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Smyth proposed:

“This Council condemns the recent serious violence and public disorder that took place not only in Belfast, but across Northern Ireland

It condemns paramilitarism, the use of violence for political ends and the exploitation of young people and working class communities.

We were deeply troubled to see images of children and young people involved in violence and deplore the risk of another generation seeing violence as a response to political frustrations. Whilst matters have

thankfully settled over the past 2 weeks, we still believe that the underlying issues prevail and the threat of violence is near too far away from the surface in Northern Ireland.

As the main political body of this city, we have a moral and ethical duty to do everything we can to protect our citizens, particularly those young people at risk of being manipulated into street violence, as well as our duty of care to front line council staff carrying out daily essential services. We must also move away from simply offering condemnation and begin to look at solutions that will offer our young people hope and invest in their futures.

This Council will: commit to supporting all elements of the Youth Service, including our own Belfast Youth Forum; and will convene an urgent meeting of the relevant statutory agencies and third sector organisations to develop a consistent, young person led approach for the coming summer period; engage with relevant departments to ensure that discretionary funding is made available to support youth engagement and intervention; engage with Trade Unions to ensure safety of our staff and; will support the ongoing process for the formation of a NI Youth Assembly; and seek assurances that Youth Citizens' Assemblies will be considered as an engagement model to make recommendations for the city on addressing poverty, inequality, eradicating paramilitarism, integrating communities, expanding opportunity and tackling the climate crises.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Mulholland.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the People and Communities Committee.

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Chairman