

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall and also Remotely, via Microsoft Teams on
Thursday, 1st July, 2021 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor;
(Councillor Nicholl) (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire);
The High Sheriff (Councillor Long);
Aldermen Dorrian, Kingston, Rodgers
and Sandford; and Councillors Baker,
Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan,
Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr,
de Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett,
Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard,
Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons,
Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCullough,
McCabe, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin,
McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, O'Hara,
Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Aldermen Copeland and McCoubrey and Councillors McAllister, McCusker and Newton.

Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared an interest in item "Finance Update", under the Strategic Policy and Resource minutes of 18th June (Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme), for the reasons detailed below.

- Councillor Baker, in that his brother was a voluntary Director of Feile an Phobail, as this was a non-pecuniary position Councillor Baker was permitted to participate in the discussion;
- Councillor Gormley, in that he was a Board member of LORAG which is part of a community partnership that had previously received funding from the Programme and he left the meeting whilst the matter was being considered.
- Councillors Flynn and Dorrian as Board Members of the East Side Partnership that had previously received funding from the Programme, as these were Council appointments there was no requirement to leave the meeting and they were permitted to participate in the discussion;

- Councillor T. Kelly, in that her husband was an employee of a community group that had previously received funding from the Programme in 2019 and she left the meeting whilst the matter was being discussed; and
- Councillor McCabe, in that she was an employee of Feile an Phobail and she left the meeting whilst the matter was being considered.

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the People and Communities Committee, under the heading “Rosario Youth Club – Funding Request”, in that he was a Member of Rosario Football Club and he left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl),
Seconded by Councillor Murphy and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Annual meeting of the Council of 1st June and the Special meeting of 1st June be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor, together with a number of Members, extended their condolences to Councillor Baker on the death of his father, Joseph and also to the City Solicitor on the death of his father, Christopher.

Councillor Magee expressed condolences to the family of Mr. Gerald McGuigan, a former Belfast City Councillor.

Alderman Kingston advised that Mr. Isaac Herzog had recently been elected as President of Israel, following in the footsteps of his Belfast-born father. The Lord Mayor agreed to write to Mr. Herzog congratulating him on his appointment.

Decisions of the Chief Executive taken under Delegated Authority

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Groogan
Seconded by Councillor Heading,

That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee and subject to the omission of the minutes under the headings Asset Management, Belfast Destination Hub – Acquisition of Site and City Centre Property – Targeted Acquisition which were agreed at the special meeting earlier, be approved and adopted.

At the request of Councillor Heading, the Council agreed that the Lord Mayor to write to CAPITA inviting representatives to an all-Party delegation to discuss its handling of the Personal Independent Payment assessment process.

Amendment

Finance Update

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

“due to the exceptional circumstances of this year and the fact that it is now July, that the open call for the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme is suspended for this year only. The funding, which is already included in the annual budget, is allocated to the same groups which were awarded funding following the open call in 2019, with the same amount again being ear-marked for each. These groups will be required to submit application forms which will be subject to due diligence, the application process will be opened to these groups immediately, that there be no fixed closing date so that applications can be assessed as they come in and funding awarded. Mindful that of the fact that some, though not all, events are planned for August, authority be delegated to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to hold a special Committee meeting on 2nd August to approve grants for those applications approved by then. All planned events obviously must be compliant with Covid restrictions at the time, with the use of Council Parks for approved events in August granted, if required, and that Call-in on this matter be suspended.”

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

<u>For 34</u>	<u>Against 17</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Dorrian, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Hussey, Hutchinson, Kyle, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.	The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors de Faoite, Flynn, Groogan, Harvey, Heading, Howard, M. Kelly, Lyons, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Smyth and Whyte.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Committee of 18th June, were approved and adopted, subject to the omission of the minutes under the headings Asset Management, Belfast Destination Hub – Acquisition of Site and City Centre Property – Targeted Acquisition.

Ad Hoc Committee

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh,

That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Ad Hoc Committee be approved and adopted and accordingly the Council ratifies the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the establishment of the Standards and Business Committee.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Ad Hoc Committee not be approved and adopted and accordingly the Council does not agree to ratify the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the establishment of the Standards and Business Committee.

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>
The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, M. Kelly, Lyons, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Smyth and Whyte.	The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Dorrian, Kingston and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McCabe, McAteer, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.

Adoption of Minutes

The decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Ad Hoc Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Committee of 14th June, were approved and adopted and accordingly the Council ratified the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the establishment of the Standards and Business Committee.

People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Cobain,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy, and

Resolved - That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the People and Communities Committee and the minute of the meeting of the Members of the Committee, of 8th and 22nd June be approved and adopted.

At the request of Councillor Gormley, the Council agreed that a report be submitted to the August meeting of the People and Communities Committee, asking the Committee to consider allocating additional funding to cover the months of April, May and June 2021 in respect of Rosario Youth Club.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, the minute of the meeting of the Members of the Committee of 9th June, and the minute of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 23rd June, be approved and adopted, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading "Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review", which was subject to a valid call-in requisition and is not before the Council for approval and adoption.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

"That the current extended Sunday trading hours are not brought back to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for further extension beyond 5th September, 2021. And that the Council acknowledges the full range of challenges facing retail in the city, write to The Executive Office requesting an urgent meeting of the High Streets Task Force."

On a recorded vote, forty-three Members voted for the amendment and eight against with one no vote, and it was declared carried.

<u>For 43</u>	<u>Against 8</u>	<u>No Vote 1</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Dorrian, Kingston, and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Heading, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McCabe, McAteer, McCullough, McKeown McLaughlin, Murphy, Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.	The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Hanvey, Howard, M. Kelly, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, McReynolds and Mulholland.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl)

Adoption of Minutes

The decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Committee of 9th June and 23rd June, were approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth, and

Resolved – That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Licensing Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Licensing Committee of 16th June, be approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan, and

Resolved - That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Planning Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Planning Committee of 15th and 24th June, be approved and adopted.

Motions

Transfer of Regeneration Powers to Local Authorities

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor McReynolds proposed:

“The economic impact caused by Covid-19 has had a devastating impact on many of our businesses and it is essential Council has the necessary powers and funding to support the rebuilding of our local economy.

The new councils formed in 2015 were designed to be larger and more powerful, and since then Belfast City Council has demonstrated its competence and capability. Successfully undertaking planning and local economic development functions and delivering vital services.

One of the key levers that Councils were promised, and is now needed, is the power of regeneration. Place shaping is increasingly becoming a critical part of the recovery process, especially in an environment where places will be different and there is a need of local solutions. Obtaining control of regeneration powers will also complement the Local Development Plans and our community planning framework.

In recognition of the consultation on Programme for Government, Investment Strategy and Budget, lobbying by NILGA and other stakeholders, we call on this council to write to The Executive Office and the Department for Communities for the transfer of full regeneration powers and associated resources to local authorities as a matter of priority.”

The proposer of the Motion advised that he wished to add the following sentence to the motion:

“As soon as an equality statement is agreed by all councils, to ensure the principle of objective need is central to any use of future powers or resources.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Hanvey.

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

Paid Leave for Miscarriage

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Michelle Kelly proposed:

“The Council recognises the emotional trauma and loss suffered by parents as a result of stillbirths and miscarriages.

The Council also notes a growing number of employers across the UK and Ireland are offering paid leave to employees who have experienced or been affected by early pregnancy loss and miscarriage.

As such Council will bring forward compassionate, fair, and progressive proposals for bereavement leave to provide leave for miscarriage and for stillbirth so employees who have been impacted do not have to use sick or annual holiday leave.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Mulholland.

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

Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Bunting proposed:

“This Council,

Acknowledges the unique achievement of Her Majesty The Queen as our longest serving monarch in history, hails her life of service to our nation, to the Commonwealth and to many aspects of international life, and agrees to organise a programme of events celebrating her Platinum Jubilee in 2022, including a funding programme for events organised by local communities across the city, as permitted by Covid restrictions at that time.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Spratt.

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

Marking the Centenary of the Ulster Memorial Tower

In accordance with notice on the agenda Alderman Kingston proposed:

“This Council notes that this November marks the centenary of the opening of the Ulster Memorial Tower, on 19th November 1921, near Thiepval in France, as a lasting tribute to the men of Ulster who served and who gave their lives during the First World War.

Its position, opposite Thiepval Wood, is a particular reminder of the Officers and Men of the 36th (Ulster) Division who fell during the Battle of the Somme, and is a specific tribute to the Division’s heroic charge on the opening day of that great offensive.

This Council notes the various historic connections between the Ulster Memorial Tower and Belfast City Council and agrees to include recognition of this connection in our Centenary programme this year.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Pankhurst.

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

Chat Bench and Tackling Loneliness

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Howard proposed:

“This Council notes that the challenges of loneliness and how this has been compounded during the pandemic. Loneliness is now endemic across Northern Ireland. 88% of people in N.I. say loneliness has become a bigger problem since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. 1 in 3 people in N.I. are ‘more often lonely’ and chronic loneliness affects 1 in 20 people.

This Council further notes the recent British Red Cross N.I report – The longest Year: Life under local restrictions, has called on the Executive to take urgent action to tackle loneliness and states that N.I remains the only part of the UK without a governmental loneliness strategy. 70 organisations including NICVA have also called for an urgent strategy to be brought forward.

This Council can do something tangible to tackle isolation and loneliness by agreeing to consider the repurposing of 2 council owned benches as ‘Happy to Chat Benches’. One of these is situated in the grounds of City Hall and the other in the Titanic quarter. Many Councils across the UK including some in N.I. have introduced chat benches to help break down the barriers of social isolation and to get people talking.

This Council also calls on the Minister for Health to initiate the development of a Northern Ireland Loneliness Strategy in partnership with other relevant Executive colleagues.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor de Faoite.

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

Lord Mayor
Chairperson