

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



Belfast
City Council

21st October, 2021

MEETING OF STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in a Hybrid meeting - Council Chamber and Remote on Tuesday, 26th October, 2021 at 5.30 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. **Routine Matters**
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Declarations of Interest
2. **Notices of Motion Received for Council on 1st November** (Pages 1 - 14)
3. **NI Local Government Code of Conduct Acceptance and Registration of Gifts and Hospitality** (Pages 15 - 16)
4. **Standards and Business Committee - Programme of Work** (Pages 17 - 22)
5. **Agenda for Workshop** (Pages 23 - 24)



Subject:	Notices of Motion Received for Council on 1st November
Date:	
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 Notices of Motion received for the meeting of the Council on 1 st November.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the motions and agree to either adopt the motions for consideration at the Council meeting, reject the motions or refer the motion directly to a Committee.

3.0	Main Report
	<p data-bbox="272 259 432 293"><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p data-bbox="165 327 1449 394">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:</p> <p data-bbox="165 461 1473 629">3.2 (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 data-bbox="325 663 1473 831">(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 data-bbox="349 864 1473 965">(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 data-bbox="349 999 1473 1066">(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 data-bbox="349 1099 1473 1200">(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 data-bbox="349 1234 1473 1357">(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> <p data-bbox="272 1424 887 1458">The following five motions have been received:</p> <p data-bbox="325 1514 919 1547">1. Tourism Street Signage – Councillor Long</p> <p data-bbox="272 1570 1473 1648">Tourism issues are dealt with by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee – potential costs in developing a strategy - and should be referred to that Committee for consideration.</p> <p data-bbox="325 1738 1182 1771">2. Community Sector Terms and Conditions – Councillor Bunting</p> <p data-bbox="272 1805 1473 1895">Calling on the Minister of Communities to undertake a review – no cost implications to the Council – debate.</p> <p data-bbox="325 1984 1358 2018">3. Rent Controls and Regulation of Holiday Lets in Belfast – Councillor O’Hara</p>

	<p>Calling on the Executive to bring forward a Rent Control scheme - no cost implications to the Council – debate.</p> <p>4. COP26 – Global Day of Action on 6 November</p> <p>Calling on the Council to support the march in Belfast - no cost implications to the Council – debate.</p> <p>5. Regulation of AirBnBs</p> <p>Calling on the Executive to review and bring forward a regulatory and licensing system - no cost implications to the Council – debate.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	<p>Documents Attached</p> <p>Copies of the Notices of Motion received.</p>
	<p>None.</p>

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Tourism Street Signage

“This Council calls for the erection of street signage in the city centre to mark the location of important historical events related to the 'Belfast Enlightenment' period of our shared history in the late 18th Century. The aim is to encourage increased footfall in the city centre and improve the tourist offering.

This Council will work with other relevant agencies to develop this strategy.”

Proposer: Councillor Long

Seconder: Councillor McMullan

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Community Sector Terms and Conditions

“This Council commends and recognises the extraordinary efforts of the community sector during the emergency response period of COVID19. Their ability to react quickly and effectively during the first days of the pandemic and to assist and help the most vulnerable and those most in need in our society.

This council also recognises the challenges facing the community sector, particularly in relation to terms and conditions and salary levels, and agrees to write to the Minister for Communities and request a review been undertaken and actions identified to support and strengthen this valuable and essential Sector.”

Proposer: Councillor Bunting

Seconder: Alderman Dorrian

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Rent Controls

“This Council supports a system of rent controls in the City.

This council notes with grave concern the escalating prices of rents in all parts of Belfast, notes the failure of the executive to regulate the rental market and notes the significant additional number of students moving to the city with the relocation of the University of Ulster campus to North Belfast. This council is concerned about the increasing number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) spreading across the city, the escalation of living costs, while wages stagnate and National Insurance contributions increase.

This council calls on the Executive to; immediately bring forward a Rent Control scheme for the City.”

Proposer: Councillor O’Hara

Secunder: Councillor Groogan

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COP26 – Global Day of Action on 6 November

“Council notes that:

1. The UN climate negotiations, known as COP26, will take place in Glasgow from 31 Oct to 12 Nov 2021.
2. Human-caused climate breakdown is leading to and exacerbating extreme weather events across the globe. The most recent IPCC Report warned that many of these changes are unprecedented, and some are already ‘irreversible’.
3. The IPCC has also warned of dire consequences of exceeding the 1.5°C global average temperature rise and called for halving of global carbon emissions by 2030, yet emissions have continued to rise; and current emission reductions pledges as part of the Paris Agreement will set us on a course for a disastrous 3.5 degrees of warming.
4. The climate crisis is a social justice issue, with those who have done least to cause the crisis facing the worst impact.
5. Wealthy, industrialised countries have a responsibility to take on their fair share of emissions reductions and need to increase targets for emission reductions by significantly investing in green energy, public transport, and retro-fitting of buildings, and by leaving fossil fuels in the ground.
6. We also face a global crisis of unemployment and that the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic represents an ideal opportunity to invest in climate jobs, a just transition, and a fairer society.
7. Significant pressure is needed from across society, including local government, to ensure real action is taken to stop a climate catastrophe.
8. The COP26 Coalition - with local hubs across these islands, including in Belfast - has issued a call for a Global Day of Action on 6 November, and a march has been called in Belfast accordingly, to demand action.

Council therefore resolves:

To support the march in Belfast on 6 November; to circulate to Council staff information about the march; to issue a press statement indicating its support for the march, as well as publicising the march details on all social media channels; and finally, to light up City Hall green on the evening of the 5 November, in anticipation of the march the following day.”

Proposer: Councillor Ferguson

Seconder: Councillor Matt Collins

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Regulation of AirBnBs

“Council notes with concern the unregulated proliferation of AirBnBs and similar types of short-term lets in Belfast and the impact this is having on communities. In particular, council recognises the impact on residents through antisocial behaviour occurring at many such properties, the impact on the make-up and character of communities as properties previously used as residential homes are switched to short-term lets of this type, and the impact on both the affordability of properties and the availability of long-term tenancies in many areas.

Council therefore agrees to write to the Northern Ireland Executive requesting an urgent cross-departmental review of this issue, and the creation of a robust and effective regulatory and licensing system for properties intended for use as short-term lets of this type, including capacity to create areas of special concern where the number of properties authorised for such use can be capped to avoid an imbalance in housing diversity, affordability and availability.”

Proposer: Councillor McKeown

Seconder: Councillor McCusker

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Subject:	NI Local Government Code of Conduct – Acceptance and Registration of Gifts and Hospitality
Date:	21st June, 2019
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 consider the limit to be set for the receipt of any gift, hospitality, material benefit or service above which must be notified to the Chief Executive.
2.0	Recommendations
	The Committee is asked to agree that any gift, hospitality, material benefit or service received above the value of £50 be reported to the Chief Executive and recorded in the appropriate Register.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>

Members should be aware that the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors at paragraph 4.20 - Acceptance and registration of gifts and hospitality - states:

You must:

- a) in accordance with any standing orders of your council and within 28 days of receipt of any gift, hospitality, material benefit or service, which is above a value specified in a resolution of your council, provide written notification to your chief executive of the existence and nature of that gift, hospitality, material benefit or service;*
- b) not accept from anyone gifts, hospitality, material benefits or services for yourself or any other person, which might place you, or reasonably appear to place you, under an improper obligation; and*
- c) discourage gifts and offers of hospitality to any family members which might place you, or reasonably appear to place you, under an improper obligation.*

The current value above which the gifts and hospitality etc. are reported to the Chief Executive is £50 and it is proposed that this limit is maintained for the next Council term.

As with declarations of interest, it is the responsibility of the Councillor to report the receipt of such gifts. However, if a Member has any queries or concerns, advice can be sought from Legal Services/Democratic Services on whether or not it would be appropriate to report any gifts received.

Financial & Resource Implications

None associated with this report.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None associated with this report.

4.0

Appendices

None.



Subject:	Standards and Business Committee: Programme of Work
Date:	26 October 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officers:	Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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
1.1	The purpose of this report is to brief the Standards and Business Committee on its draft outline Programme of Work.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	It is recommended that the Standards and Business Committee notes the attached draft Programme of Work and provides any feedback to officers.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Following the constitution of the Standards and Business Committee and the appointment of Members to it, a draft outline Programme of Work has been developed for the committee and is attached here as Appendix 1.</p>

3.2	<p><u>Standards and Business Committee Programme of Work</u></p> <p>The outline programme of work sets out the issues that the Standards and Business Committee is expected to consider during 2021 / 2022. It is aligned to the Committee's Terms of Reference and is intended to help Members and officers plan their work.</p> <p>The programme will be regularly reviewed and updated to incorporate any new or emerging issues and is subject to change across the year accounting for any resource implications and / or matters arising from Members.</p> <p>In addition to the standing agenda items of apologies, agreeing and adopting the minutes of the previous meeting and declaring any interests, the attached appendix sets out those agenda items that will occur on a monthly, quarterly, six-monthly or annual basis or on an ongoing basis / as required.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The committee is currently being serviced by existing resources within Governance and Compliance Services, including Democratic Services. A budget for the operation of this committee is being requested through the Revenue Estimates process.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Any equality, good relations and rural needs assessments implications will be subject to the usual screening processes.</p>
4.0	Appendices
4.1	Appendix 1 – Draft Outline Programme of Work

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE DRAFT OUTLINE PROGRAMME OF WORK

MAIN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by elected Members and officers
- encouraging positive joint working across political groups and between officers and Members while upholding high standards of values and behaviours in a relationship of mutual trust
- supporting and facilitating collaborative working between Members and senior officers, particularly to support the consideration of strategic priorities by relevant committees

DRAFT OUTLINE PROGRAMME OF WORK

The proposed programme of work sets out the issues that the Standards and Business Committee is expected to consider during 2021 / 2022. It is aligned to the Committee's Terms of Reference and is intended to help Members and officers plan their work. The programme will be regularly reviewed and updated to incorporate any new or emerging issues and is subject to change across the year accounting for any resource implications and / or matters arising from Members. In addition to the standing agenda items of apologies, agreeing and adopting the minutes of the previous meeting and declaring any interests, the below table sets out those agenda items that will occur on a monthly, quarterly, six-monthly or annual basis or on an ongoing basis / as required.

FREQUENCY OF AGENDA ITEM	AGENDA ITEM
MONTHLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive, review and either adopt or refer Notices of Motion as necessary• Review and note agenda items for other Standing Committees which identify standards implications
QUARTERLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noting the previous quarterly session of the joint CMT / Party Group Leaders facilitated working group• Note the quarterly review of committee plans• Review of report from Monitoring Officer to update Members on any complaints resolved through the Members' Internal Dispute Resolution Protocol or referred to the Local Government

FREQUENCY OF AGENDA ITEM	AGENDA ITEM
	<p>Commissioner for Standards, and any proposed amendments to the Members' Internal Dispute Resolution Protocol in light of any issues that have arisen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of updates to the Coll Report Action Plan
SIX-MONTHLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of alignment of Notices of Motion with the corporate plan and consideration of strategic policies by relevant committees • Review of the operation of the Standards and Business Committee and making any recommendations • Review of the previous biannual training presentation on [e.g Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors / use of social media / COI / membership of 3rd party organisations] for Members and relevant officers • Receive and note investigations / adjudications made by the NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards and any related recommendations • Review of the Council's Scheme of Delegation
ANNUALLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the programme of facilitated work between Members and officers and make recommendations for the programme • Review of programme of Member training, Members' rate of attendance and Members' feedback on training • Review of the Council's Members' Internal Dispute Resolution Protocol and revising / updating it as necessary • Receive and note the NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards Annual Report • Notation of the Members' Register of Declaration of Interests, Register of Gifts & Hospitality and membership of 3rd party organisations

FREQUENCY OF AGENDA ITEM	AGENDA ITEM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Council constitution and providing recommendations to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee as to any required amendments thereto in relation to the standards regime
ONGOING / AS NEEDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the Council's Standing Orders with a view to making recommendations to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee Advising the Council on the Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors, including any revisions thereto Developing, monitoring and reviewing any local protocols required to support the standards regime within the Council Ensuring adherence to the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol Overseeing any mediation process put in place to restore internal relationships between political parties, Members and / or officers Receiving and considering any guidance from the Local Government Commissioner for Standards Receiving and noting decisions of other Standards Committees Planning activities to promote Officer/Member relationships e.g. workshop / away day Identifying points of learning / required standards training and best practice, and disseminating this information to all Members (e.g. confidentiality of restricted reports, tweeting during meetings) Oversight and review of ethical standards policies eg ethical procurement, modern slavery, social value Initial consideration and review of Council matters that are under internal or external investigation

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Develop a Joint Declaration of Cooperation between Members and Officers
- Review of the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors in relation to Acceptance and Registration of Gifts and Hospitality
- Receive and consider any guidance from the Local Government Commissioner for Standards
- Receive and note decisions of other Standards Committees

- Activities to promote Officer/Member relationships e.g. workshop / away day
- Discuss the role of Councillor / civic offices
- Identify points of learning / required standards training and best practice and disseminate this information to all Members
- Draw attention to standards issues (eg confidentiality of restricted reports, tweeting during meetings)
- Initial consideration and review of Council matters that are under internal or external investigation

**BELFAST CITY COUNCIL
STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE
AGENDA FOR WORKSHOP
OCTOBER 2021**

1. Introduction

- Committee role
- Introduction of Wavell Moore and explanation of support role
- Committee's Terms of Reference

2. Immediate priorities for Committee

- Dispute Resolution Protocol

3. Enhanced programme of governance training on requirements of the Code

- Social Media and the Code of Conduct
- Conflicts of interest
- General underlining of the other key provisions of the Code based on case histories

4. Potential review of the provisions of current Members' Code of Conduct

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