

Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast
City Council**

21st January, 2024

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room and remotely via Teams on Tuesday, 23rd January, 2024 at 5.30 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

2. Motions

- (a) Notice of Motion – Transparency by Default Belfast City Council (Pages 1 - 4)
- (b) Notice of Motion – Rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy (Pages 5 - 8)



Subject:	Notice of Motion – Transparency by Default – Belfast City Council
Date:	23rd January, 2024
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 5%; text-align: center;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"> </td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision		After Council Decision		Sometime in the future		Never	
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Never									

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider the Notice of Motion received for the meeting of the Council on 1st February in relation to the Policy on Transparency.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note that this motion will be referred on the first instance to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	<p>The Committee will be aware that Standing Orders 13 (m) to (r), as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, are as follows:</p> <p>(m) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will have delegated authority to adopt or reject Notices of Motion. The Lord Mayor will indicate at the Council meeting those Notices of Motion that have been considered by the Standards and Business Committee and whether such Notices of Motion were rejected or adopted. In either case, the proposer only may speak on the issue at Council.</i></p> <p>(n) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will refer all Notices of Motion directly to a standing committee when the matter to which the Notice of Motion refers falls within the remit of that committee. At Council, the Lord Mayor will indicate that the Notice of Motion was received and referred. There will be no speakers on such Notices of Motion at Council.</i></p> <p>(o) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will refer Notices of Motion for consideration by full Council when the Notice of Motion relates to a strategic or constitutional matter.</i></p> <p>(p) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will not have the power to amend the wording of any Notice of Motion that is being referred to the full Council for debate.</i></p> <p>(q) <i>Any amendments to Notice of Motions to be proposed at the Council are to be furnished at least one day in advance of going to the full Council and will be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting.</i></p> <p>(r) <i>In referring any matter to the full Council, the Standards and Business Committee may determine to restrict contributions to the debate in relation to any Notice of Motion to one per political party. At the Council meeting, the Lord Mayor will clearly indicate if the restriction applies.</i></p>
3.2	<p>The following motion has been received:</p> <p><u>'Transparency by default' at Belfast City Council</u></p> <p>This council believes that maintaining public trust in the democratic process is essential. A key part of this is ensuring that decisions are made openly and can subject to public scrutiny. Council recognises the concern that there is about the degree to which council, committee and working group discussions and decisions are being conducted in restricted session, and the wholesale redaction of documentation that accompanies these matters.</p>

3.3	<p>To help maintain public trust and ensure that the people of this city can be fully informed about how decisions that affect them have been reached, this council is committed to a policy of 'transparency by default' by which all meetings and documentation will be placed in the public domain as standard, with information or discussions only being redacted or restricted very specifically in relation to those issues which fall within the exemptions in the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. To that end, committee reports will, in addition to identifying the relevant exemption in the 2014 Act, also set out a rationale as to why information or discussions are to be restricted, when this is the case.</p> <p>Officers will also bring forward guidelines in relation to all council, committee and working group discussions and decisions which will enable this approach, to ensure maximum transparency while adhering to legislative requirements, ultimately making this organisation an exemplar public body in terms of transparency and openness.</p> <p><u>Proposer: Councillor Gary McKeown</u></p> <p><u>Seconder: Councillor Donal Lyons</u></p> <p>The motion calls upon the Council to undertake transparency by default by bringing forward guidelines in relation to all council, committee and working group discussions and decisions which will enable this approach, to ensure maximum transparency while adhering to legislative requirements – the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for governance issues and the motion will be referred to that Committee.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.4	None associated with this report.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u>
3.5	None.
4.0	Documents Attached
	None.

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Subject:	Notice of Motion – Rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy
Date:	23rd January, 2024
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider the Notice of Motion received for the meeting of the Council on 1st February in relation to the Rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note that this motion will be referred on the first instance to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	<p>The Committee will be aware that Standing Orders 13 (m) to (r), as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, are as follows:</p> <p>(m) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will have delegated authority to adopt or reject Notices of Motion. The Lord Mayor will indicate at the Council meeting those Notices of Motion that have been considered by the Standards and Business Committee and whether such Notices of Motion were rejected or adopted. In either case, the proposer only may speak on the issue at Council.</i></p> <p>(n) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will refer all Notices of Motion directly to a standing committee when the matter to which the Notice of Motion refers falls within the remit of that committee. At Council, the Lord Mayor will indicate that the Notice of Motion was received and referred. There will be no speakers on such Notices of Motion at Council.</i></p> <p>(o) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will refer Notices of Motion for consideration by full Council when the Notice of Motion relates to a strategic or constitutional matter.</i></p> <p>(p) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will not have the power to amend the wording of any Notice of Motion that is being referred to the full Council for debate.</i></p> <p>(q) <i>Any amendments to Notice of Motions to be proposed at the Council are to be furnished at least one day in advance of going to the full Council and will be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting.</i></p> <p>(r) <i>In referring any matter to the full Council, the Standards and Business Committee may determine to restrict contributions to the debate in relation to any Notice of Motion to one per political party. At the Council meeting, the Lord Mayor will clearly indicate if the restriction applies.</i></p>
3.2	<p>The following motion has been received:</p> <p><u>Rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy</u></p> <p>“This Council deplores those corporations that profit from protracted armed conflict and systematic violations of human rights, particularly in the context of Israel’s continuing brutal assault on the people of Gaza and escalating settler terrorism in the West Bank, Russia’s ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, and other conflicts around the world. With this motion, the Council encourages companies to meet their</p>

	<p>obligations to avoid contributing to adverse human rights impacts through their own activities, and to prevent or mitigate human rights abuses linked to their operations.</p> <p>The Council is aware of the crucial role of local authorities and their public procurement procedures in ensuring respect for human rights by companies, as well as their obligations under widely accepted business and human rights norms – as laid down in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and the Global Sullivan Principles (1999) – to promote respect for human rights by companies with which they do business.</p> <p>The Council affirms that every endeavour is made to ensure that councils tender processes are consistent with the above principles, including under the Fourth Geneva convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and under customary international humanitarian law, prohibiting the importation or sale of goods or services originating in occupied territories.</p> <p>This Council resolves to adopt a rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy (EPP) that takes fully into account existing obligations and standards. The EPP will incorporate widely accepted and precisely formulated international standards and explain clearly how the policy will be implemented. The primary aim of the EPP is to ensure that human rights obligations are properly acknowledged, observed and respected at all stages of the procurement process.”</p> <p>Proposer: Councillor Bronach Anglin</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor Aine McCabe</p>
3.3	<p>The motion calls upon the Council to adopt a rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy (EPP) - the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for procurement and the motion will be referred to that Committee.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
4.0	<p>Documents Attached</p>
	<p>None.</p>

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