

Council

SPECIAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall
on Monday, 1st December, 2025 at 5.30 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Kelly (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Doherty;
The High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer;
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey,
McCullough and Rodgers; and
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Beattie, Bell,
Black, Bower, Bradley, Brennan, R. Brooks,
T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain,
Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly,
R.M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas,
Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,
Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, McCabe, McCallin,
McCann, McCormick, McCusker, McDonough-Brown,
McDowell, McKay, McKeown, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin, Meenehan, Murphy, Murray,
Nelson, Ó Néill, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive read the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

**Call in - Flying of the Palestinian Flag to mark the
UN Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

The Lord Mayor stated that the Council had been provided with an equality screening, correspondence and the legal opinion of Ms. D. Kiley KC with regards to the decision of the Council at its meeting on 3rd November, 2025, under the heading "Human Rights Day 2025 - Flag Requests" contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, in respect of the flying of the national flag of Palestine at City Hall on 29th November, 2025.

She explained that the call-in, under sections 41(1)(a) and (b) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 had been considered by Counsel to have merit on procedural grounds but not on the grounds of a disproportionate adverse impact on a section of inhabitants of the district.

She stated that, notwithstanding the current provisions in Standing Orders, the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 required the Council to reconsider its decision and determine whether there was a disproportionate adverse impact on a section of inhabitants of the district, having regard to the legal opinion received and any other relevant considerations.

Proposal 1

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

“That, having regard to the legal opinion and all other information received, the Council agrees that the flying of the Palestinian flag on Belfast City Hall did not have a disproportionate adverse community impact.”

On a recorded vote, forty-three Members voted for the proposal and seventeen against and it was declared carried.

For (43)	Against (17)
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Doherty); The High Sheriff (Councillor McAteer); and Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, Brennan, T. Brooks, Canavan, Carson, Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Duffy, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, McCabe, McCallin, McCann, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKay, McKeown, R. McLaughlin, Meenehan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Ó Néill, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Kelly); Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers; and Councillors R. Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas, Ferguson, McCormick, McDowell, I. McLaughlin and Verner.

Proposal 2

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor R-M. Donnelly,

“That the Council agrees, in recognition of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to erect the national flag of Palestine above the City Hall on the next available day from midnight, 1st December, 2025.”

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Long.
Seconded by Councillor Nelson,

“That the Council agrees not to erect the Palestinian Flag on City Hall but instead, illuminates the City Hall in the colours of Palestine in January, following the removal of the Christmas market.”

On a vote, eleven Members voted for the amendment and forty-nine against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the proposal standing in the name of Councillor Murphy was put to the Council and on a vote, thirty-two Members voted for the proposal and twenty-eight against and it was declared carried.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson