

Council

MONTHLY MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall on Monday, 2nd December, 2019
at 6.00 o'clock p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Finucane) (Chairperson); the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); the High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford); Aldermen Copeland, Haire, Kingston, McCoubrey and Rodgers; and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Black, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Dorrian, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Graham, Groves, Hanvey, Hargey, Heading, Hussey, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, McAllister, McAteer, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Spence and Councillors Groogan, Howard, Hutchinson, McMullan, Mulholland, Nicholl and Smyth.

Declarations of Interest

The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford) declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "National Association of Councillors – Attendance at National Executive Meetings", in that he was the Chair of the Association, but was not required to leave the Chamber as the matter did not become the subject of discussion.

The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford) and Councillors de Faoite and Garrett declared an interest in respect of the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "Northern Ireland Local Government Association – Annual Conference, Exhibition and Local Government Awards 2020", on the basis that they were Executive Members of the Association, but were not required to leave the Chamber as the matter did not become the subject of discussion.

Councillor Black declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "Revenue Estimates and District Rate", in that that she managed one of the facilities referred to within the Committee report, but was not required to leave the Chamber as the matter did not become the subject of discussion.

Councillor Whyte declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "Presentations – Ulster Orchestra and The Mac", in that that he was on the Board of the Ulster Orchestra and his company had undertaken consultancy work on behalf of The Mac, but was not required to leave the Chamber as the matter did not become the subject of discussion.

Councillor Newton declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "Presentations – Ulster Orchestra and The Mac", on the basis that the company for which he worked provided support to the Ulster Orchestra, but was not required to leave the Chamber as the matter did not become the subject of discussion.

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in respect of the motion on Bowel and Breast Cancer Screening, insofar as it involved issues of policy which were relevant to the work of his employer, and left the Chamber whilst the motion was being debated.

Councillors Long and McCusker declared an interest in relation to the motion on Support for Health and Social Care Workers, in that they were employed by the National Health Service, but remained in the Chamber whilst the motion was being debated.

Councillor Lyons declared an interest in relation to the motion on Support for Health and Social Care Workers, on the basis that he was a member of the Belfast Local Commissioning Group, but remained in the Chamber whilst the motion was being debated.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Finucane),
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 4th November be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, extended his deepest condolences to the families of Saskia Jones and Jack Merritt, who had lost their lives as a result of the London Bridge attack on 29th November.

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Councillor Nicholl and her husband Fergal, on the recent birth of their son, Cian Luca.

Councillor Bunting congratulated the Belvoir Area Residents' Group, City Connections and the Short Strand Community Forum, on their success in the 2019 Pride of Place community awards.

Councillor McAllister referred to an article which had been published in a local newspaper on the day of the meeting regarding her non-attendance at meetings of the

Brexit Committee. She pointed out that the article had failed to reflect the fact that women in politics were not entitled to maternity leave and that she intended to submit to the Council in due course a motion which would seek to address the issue.

Requests to Address the Council

Homelessness

The Chief Executive reported that a request had been received from Ms. P. Hardy, a teacher in John Paul II Primary School, to allow a number of Primary 7 pupils to address the Council in advance of the motion on Homelessness being proposed by Councillor Corr.

The Council acceded to the request and Lauren Chambers, Tiernagh Donnelly and Joshua Rooney were welcomed by the Lord Mayor.

The pupils informed the Council that 11,000 people in Northern Ireland were regarded as being homeless and highlighted the fact that, in 2016, five homeless people had died within a two-month period in the City centre area. They outlined the work which their school was undertaking around the issue of homelessness, which included the organising of fundraising events and the production of a wristband, and thanked Councillor Corr for providing them with an opportunity to publicise that work through the Council meeting.

They pointed out that Homelessness Awareness Week had commenced on 30th November and concluded by urging the Council to assist in raising awareness by supporting Councillor Corr's motion and by illuminating the City Hall in future years.

The Lord Mayor thanked the pupils for their presentation.

The Council noted the information which had been provided and that Members would have an opportunity to discuss the issue later in the meeting.

Support for Health and Social Care Workers

The Chief Executive reported that Mr. J. P. Clayton, Policy Officer, UNISON NI, had submitted a request for two representatives of UNISON to address the Council in advance of the motion on Support for Health and Social Care Workers being proposed by Councillor McAteer.

The Council approved the request and Ms. P. McKeown, Regional Secretary, and Ms. M. McKenna, North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Branch, were welcomed to the meeting.

Ms. McKeown reported that, since 25th November, Unison members and others across the health service had been engaged in various forms of industrial action. That action had been initiated on the grounds that rates of pay for health workers in Northern Ireland were lower than in the rest of the United Kingdom, which she stated was due to a failure by the devolved administration to maintain pay parity, in line with a previously agreed central pay deal.

She explained that, as a result of the disparity in pay and the resulting difficulties with staff retention, there were now 7,000 vacancies across the health service. She highlighted the detrimental impact which that was having upon service delivery, including the daily cancellation of appointments and operations, and confirmed that there were now some 300,000 people on waiting lists, some of whom had been waiting for up to five years on an operation.

She reported further that UNISON had advised the Head of the Civil Service and the Permanent Secretaries of the Department of Finance and the Department of Health that Ministerial approval was not needed to release the £50 million required to resolve the current crisis and had requested that, should that not be available within the current block grant, an approach be made to the Secretary of State and the Treasury.

Ms. McKenna informed the Council that she had attended meetings with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to discuss exemptions to the current industrial action. Contrary to media reports, exemptions had been given to critical care areas, which included cancer services, intensive care units, emergency departments and renal units. She pointed out that UNISON remained of the view that a negotiated settlement in the absence of a Health Minister was possible and stressed that it was willing to continue with discussions until the required level of resources were secured. A settlement would allow for pay parity to be restored and the Agenda for Change framework to be refreshed and would enable action to be taken to implement safe staffing levels and address the reliance and significant expenditure on agency workers. She concluded by inviting the Council to support Councillor McAteer's motion.

The Lord Mayor thanked Ms. McKeown and Ms. McKenna for their contribution.

The Council noted the information which had been provided and that it would have an opportunity to discuss the issue later in the meeting.

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Strategic Sites Assessment

Moved by Councillor Hargey,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

Resolved - That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd November, under the heading "Strategic Sites Assessment" be amended to provide that the Council agrees to explore mechanisms to establish partnerships for the construction of public

homes and to engage with Pension Funds, Credit Unions etc. to examine ways of investing in the development of public housing throughout the City.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd November, 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 Michael Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Kyle and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 29th October and 5th and 20th November be approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Hargey,
Seconded by Councillor O'Hara and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 6th November be approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor S. Baker,
Seconded by Councillor Donnelly and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 13th November be approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor Brooks and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 12th and 14th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.
Shareholders' Committee**

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor Magee and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 18th November be approved and adopted.

Brexit Committee

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 7th and 21st November be approved and adopted.

Variation of Minute

Commissioning of a Report

At the request of Councillor McLaughlin, the Council agreed to the variation of the minute of the meeting of 7th November, under the heading "Commissioning of a Report", to reflect that he had agreed to include Councillor Flynn's proposal around good growth, inclusive growth and an ambition to a just transition to a zero-carbon economy within his proposal and that no amendment had been put to the Committee.

**Request for a Matter to be Taken
back for Further Consideration**

Commissioning of a Report

Councillor Long requested that the Chairperson agree to the minute of the meeting of 7th November, under the heading "Commissioning of a Report", being taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

The Chairperson declined the request.

Amendment

Commissioning of a Report

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown,

That the decision of the Brexit Committee of 7th November, under the heading "Commissioning of a Report", be taken back to Committee for further consideration.

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

<u>For 22</u>	<u>Against 28</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford) Aldermen Copeland, Haire, Kingston and Rodgers; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Dorrian, Graham, Hanvey, Hussey, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, Newton, Pankhurst and Verner.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Finucane); and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Black, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groves, Hargey, Heading, Lyons, Magee, McAteer, McCusker, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, O'Hara, Walsh and Whyte.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing variation, the minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 7th and 21st November were approved and adopted.

Notices of Motion

Bowel and Breast Cancer Screening

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Canavan proposed:

“This Council notes that early diagnosis of bowel cancer and breast cancer offers patients the best chance of successful treatment.

England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland all currently use the more accurate screening test, the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) for bowel cancer and have a lowered age for screening.

NHS England is currently trialling breast cancer screening at the lower age of 47 and the upper age of 72.

This Council agrees to write to the Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, highlighting the difference in the screening service provision across Britain and Ireland and calling for the extension of the age range for bowel screening and to trial breast cancer screening at a lower age in the North of Ireland.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor S. Baker.

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

Support for Health and Social Care Workers

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor McAteer proposed:

“This Council supports the overwhelming result of the Royal College of Nurses’ ballot in favour of industrial action, supports the industrial action already being undertaken by UNISON and the decision of the other Health and Social Care (HSC) Trade Union, NIPSA, to ballot members on industrial action.

Health and social care workers are the system’s greatest assets and are entitled to fair pay and conditions, safe staffing levels and parity of pay with NHS colleagues.

Health and social care workers are taking action as they are no longer willing to see patients being denied the care to which they are entitled. There are currently over 7,000 non-medical vacancies, including 3,000 nursing posts, within the HSC system in the north of Ireland. These frontline vacancies are having a detrimental impact upon patient care and staffing, compromise the safety of staff and patients alike, contribute to long waiting lists and add enormous pressure to the existing HSC workforce, who are doing everything they can to care for patients.

This Council calls upon the Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, to engage respectfully and meaningfully with Trades Union representatives on a pay deal. It calls also upon the Permanent Secretary, alongside his colleagues in the Department of Finance and the Head of the Civil Service, to secure the funding that is needed to achieve pay parity for health workers.

Furthermore, the Council agrees to convene an all-Party meeting with those Trades Unions representing health and social care staff to hear directly the challenges which they are facing and to take such action thereon to support staff and patient care at this time.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Groves.

Councillor Dorrian requested that the proposer agree to the addition of the following wording at the end of her motion:

“Furthermore, the Council calls for the restoration, at the earliest opportunity, of the Northern Ireland Executive to address matters such as this for the benefit of our community.”

The proposer declined the request.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Dorrian,
Seconded by Councillor Brooks,

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor McAteer and seconded by Councillor Groves be amended to provide for the addition of the following wording at the end of the motion:

“Furthermore, the Council calls for the restoration, at the earliest opportunity, of the Northern Ireland Executive to address matters such as this for the benefit of our community.”

On a recorded vote nineteen Members voted for the amendment and thirty-one against and it was declared lost.

<u>For 19</u>	<u>Against 31</u>
The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford); Aldermen Copeland, Haire, Kingston, McCoubrey and Rodgers; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Dorrian, Flynn, Graham, Hussey, T. Kelly, Kyle, Newton, O’Hara, Pankhurst and Verner.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Finucane); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Black, Canavan Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Groves, Hanvey, Hargey, Heading, M. Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, McAteer, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Walsh and Whyte.

The original motion, standing in the name of Councillor McAteer and seconded by Councillor Groves, was thereupon put to the meeting and passed.

Social Media Abuse of Political Representatives

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Long proposed:

“This Council notes the increasing level of personal abuse, intimidation, smear campaigns and false information directed towards political representatives and activists, particularly during election campaigns.

It further notes the number of politicians, especially women, citing social media abuse and intimidation as a reason for leaving politics.

As Councillors, we pledge to use social media responsibly, to promote our policies positively and to engage in debate respectfully.

We call upon social media companies to also act responsibly and proactively to ensure that their platforms are not abused in this way, to end account anonymity and to co-operate with the PSNI swiftly where such abuse meets the threshold for a criminal investigation.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor O’Hara.

At the request of Councillor Black, the proposer agreed to amend his motion to provide for the addition of the following wording at the end of the second paragraph: “as well as acknowledging that such factors influence an individual’s initial decision to enter public political life.”

After discussion, the motion, as amended and set out hereunder, was put to the meeting and passed:

“This Council notes the increasing level of personal abuse, intimidation, smear campaigns and false information directed towards political representatives and activists, particularly during election campaigns.

It further notes the number of politicians, especially women, citing social media abuse and intimidation as a reason for leaving politics, as well as acknowledging that such factors influence an individual’s initial decision to enter public political life.

As Councillors, we pledge to use social media responsibly, to promote our policies positively and to engage in debate respectfully.

We call upon social media companies to also act responsibly and proactively to ensure that their platforms are not abused in this way, to end account anonymity and to co-operate with the PSNI swiftly where such abuse meets the threshold for a criminal investigation.”

Patient and Client Council – “Make Change Together Programme”

In accordance with notice on the agenda, the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds) proposed:

“This Council recognises and endorses the hard work of the Patient and Client Council, notes the launch of its new programme ‘Make Change Together’, and agrees to support awareness of the programme through all of our available channels and platforms.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Kyle.

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

Briefing Session

At the request of Councillor Heading, the Council agreed that the Chief Executive of the Patient and Client Council be invited to brief the relevant Committee on its work.

Intermediate Football

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor D. Baker proposed:

“In light of the proposed changes which the IFA will introduce to intermediate football and the concerns for the future of many grassroots clubs, I call upon this Council to engage with the FAI to explore alternative options for clubs to continue to play at the highest possible level.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Black.

On a vote by show of hands twenty-five Members voted for the motion and twenty against and it was declared carried.

Irish Unity Referendum

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Hargey proposed:

“This Council notes with deep concern the hugely damaging, toxic and chaotic politics currently being administered by the Conservative British Government regarding Brexit.

This City has an ever-growing population of young people who will ultimately have to live with the long term consequences of this British Government’s damaging policy of attempting to drag citizens out of the European Union against the wishes of the majority of citizens in Belfast who voted to remain.

As a Council, we have a duty to protect all our citizens, young and old, against the policies and hardship that this British government and its allies will bring by dragging them out of the European Union. There is no Brexit that is a good Brexit for the citizens of Belfast or elsewhere in Ireland.

This Council must, therefore, investigate alternative solutions to Brexit that seek to protect its citizens from the damaging effects which Brexit will ultimately bring.

In seeking alternative solutions to protect Belfast citizens, a referendum on Irish Unity, as enshrined within the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, must be legitimately considered. This is a solution that would protect our citizens from Brexit and is supported by categorical statements from the European Council where, in the event of Irish Unity, the citizens in the north would be returned back into the European Union.

We call upon this Council to write directly to the Taoiseach and to the British Secretary of State requesting that they clearly specify what would satisfy the requirement, as provided for under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, to facilitate an Irish Unity referendum.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McLaughlin.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey,

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor Hargey and seconded by Councillor McLaughlin be replaced with the following:

“Brexit is not an orange or green issue and attempts to make it so are profoundly unhelpful. This Council will continue to investigate issues relating to Brexit through the Brexit Committee, as they pertain to the city of Belfast.”

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

<u>For 24</u>	<u>Against 27</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford) Aldermen Copeland, Haire, Kingston, McCoubrey and Rodgers; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Dorrian, Flynn, Graham, Hanvey, Hussey, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, McDonough-Brown, Newton, O’Hara, Pankhurst and Verner.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Finucane); and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Black, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Groves, Hargey, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, McAteer, McCusker, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Walsh and Whyte.

At the request of Councillor Ferguson, the proposer agreed to amend her motion to provide for the addition of the following wording before the last paragraph:

“The Council believes that winning people to the idea of a unified state will require a vision of a different kind of Ireland, which sees an end to the low tax haven and soaring rents in the South, the complete separation of church and state, an all-island NHS and an end to sectarianism and racism and the communal carve up of resources in the North, where those who live here are welcome here, no matter where they are born, and where the rights of women and the LGBTQ+ communities are respected.”

The proposer agreed, at the request of Councillor de Faoite, to amend her motion further to provide for the addition of the following wording before the second last paragraph:

“The Council calls for the establishment of a New Ireland Forum for the 21st Century, alongside a series of comprehensive Citizens’ Assemblies, to examine the practical, social and economic aspects of a New Ireland.”

The motion, as amended and set out hereunder, was thereupon put to the meeting and passed, with twenty-seven Members voting for and twenty-two against:

“This Council notes with deep concern the hugely damaging, toxic and chaotic politics currently being administered by the Conservative British Government regarding Brexit.

This City has an ever-growing population of young people who will ultimately have to live with the long term consequences of this British Government’s damaging policy of attempting to drag citizens out of the European Union against the wishes of the majority of citizens in Belfast who voted to remain.

As a Council, we have a duty to protect all our citizens, young and old, against the policies and hardship that this British government and its allies will bring by dragging them out of the European Union. There is no Brexit that is a good Brexit for the citizens of Belfast or elsewhere in Ireland.

This Council must, therefore, investigate alternative solutions to Brexit that seek to protect its citizens from the damaging effects which Brexit will ultimately bring.

In seeking alternative solutions to protect Belfast citizens, a referendum on Irish Unity, as enshrined within the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, must be legitimately considered. This is a solution that would protect our citizens from Brexit and is supported by categorical statements from the European Council where, in the event of Irish Unity, the citizens in the north would be returned back into the European Union.

The Council calls for the establishment of a New Ireland Forum for the 21st Century, alongside a series of comprehensive Citizens’ Assemblies, to examine the practical, social and economic aspects of a New Ireland.

The Council believes that winning people to the idea of a unified state will require a vision of a different kind of Ireland, which sees an end to the low tax haven and soaring rents in the South, the complete separation of church and state, an all-island NHS and an end to sectarianism and racism and the communal carve up of resources in the North, where those who live here are welcome here, no matter where they are born, and where the rights of women and the LBGTQ+ communities are respected.

The Council agrees to write directly to the Taoiseach and to the British Secretary of State requesting that they clearly specify what would satisfy the requirement, as provided for under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, to facilitate an Irish Unity referendum.”

Irish Football Association – Criteria for Intermediate Status

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Brooks proposed:

“This Council expresses its disappointment in the proposed new Irish Football Association (IFA) criteria for intermediate status. In our view, these criteria are arbitrary and highly questionable, and we are entirely dissatisfied with the explanations which have been offered in meetings with the IFA thus far. The Council, as a long term partner of the IFA in many areas, recognises and celebrates the contribution of local intermediate football clubs to our local communities and records our distaste at the contempt which we believe our concerns, reflecting those of local communities, have been shown to date.

Furthermore, as an organisation which has invested heavily in both past and future IFA events and programmes in our City, we are concerned that the IFA has put forward these criteria as a diktat, without even basic consultation with this Council, clubs, intermediate leagues or other partner organisations. This disregard for best practice is particularly concerning, in light of previous concerns raised in the public sphere around the fitness of the IFA structures and hierarchy.

The Council calls upon the IFA to reflect upon its strategy for engaging productively with partner organisations and, crucially, to further delay the implementation of these criteria in order to revisit parts of the restructuring plan and carry out meaningful consultation with partner organisations, leagues, clubs and the communities most impacted.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Newton.

At the request of Alderman Rodgers, the proposer agreed to amend his motion to the effect that the Council would seek an urgent meeting with the President and the Chief Executive of the Irish Football Association to reiterate Members’ concerns around the Association’s proposals for Intermediate football.

The proposer agreed also, at the request of Councillor McLaughlin, to include after the word “consultation” within the last paragraph of his motion the words “including an equality screening process, and to engage”.

The motion, as amended and set out hereunder, was thereupon put to the meeting and passed:

“This Council expresses its disappointment in the proposed new Irish Football Association (IFA) criteria for intermediate status. In our view, these criteria are arbitrary and highly questionable, and we are entirely

dissatisfied with the explanations which have been offered in meetings with the IFA thus far. The Council, as a long term partner of the IFA in many areas, recognises and celebrates the contribution of local intermediate football clubs to our local communities and records our distaste at the contempt which we believe our concerns, reflecting those of local communities, have been shown to date.

Furthermore, as an organisation which has invested heavily in both past and future IFA events and programmes in our City, we are concerned that the IFA has put forward these criteria as a diktat, without even basic consultation with this Council, clubs, intermediate leagues or other partner organisations. This disregard for best practice is particularly concerning, in light of previous concerns raised in the public sphere around the fitness of the IFA structures and hierarchy.

The Council calls upon the IFA to reflect upon its strategy for engaging productively with partner organisations and, crucially, to further delay the implementation of these criteria in order to revisit parts of the restructuring plan and carry out meaningful consultation, including an equality screening process, and to engage with partner organisations, leagues, clubs and the communities most impacted.

The Council agrees to seek an urgent meeting with the President and the Chief Executive of the Irish Football Association to reiterate Members' concerns around the Association's proposals for Intermediate football."

Free-at-the-Point-of-Use Universal Healthcare

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor de Faoite proposed:

"This Council:

- i. supports the principle of publicly-owned, free-at-the-point-of-use universal healthcare;
- ii. expresses concern at a decade of cuts and encroaching privatisation of the NHS and the intent of Donald Trump to use UK-US trade negotiations as an opening for further privatisation;
- iii. opposes any further privatisation of the NHS; and
- iv. calls upon the British Government to oppose any trade deal which would force any aspect of the NHS to be privatised or exposed to exorbitant price rises for medicine or medical equipment."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Lyons.

At the request of Councillor Matt Collins, the proposer agreed to the addition of the following wording at the end of his motion: "calls upon all Parties to ensure that

defence of the NHS against outsourcing through PFI schemes is a central component of any new talks process towards the restoration of Stormont.”

After discussion, the motion, as amended and set out hereunder, was put to the meeting and passed:

“This Council:

- i. supports the principle of publicly-owned, free-at-the-point-of-use universal healthcare;
- ii. expresses concern at a decade of cuts and encroaching privatisation of the NHS and the intent of Donald Trump to use UK-US trade negotiations as an opening for further privatisation;
- iii. opposes any further privatisation of the NHS;
- iv. calls upon the British Government to oppose any trade deal which would force any aspect of the NHS to be privatised or exposed to exorbitant price rises for medicine or medical equipment; and
- v. calls upon all Parties to ensure that defence of the NHS against outsourcing through PFI schemes is a central component of any new talks process towards the restoration of Stormont.”

Women Against State Pension Inequality Campaign

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

“This Council reaffirms its support for the Women against State Pension Inequality campaign and supports a fair transitional arrangement for women affected by State Pension age changes and calls upon the Government to work with WASPI to deliver a solution for everyone.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor M. Kelly.

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

City Tree Initiative

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor McLaughlin proposed:

“This Council has ambitious plans to plant over one million trees over 15 years.

However, it acknowledges that there are several sites across Belfast that breach current legal guidelines in terms of air pollutants.

Air pollution is often hidden in plain sight, but it can have potentially life-threatening consequences. Exposure to high levels of air pollution can lead to chronic respiratory problems and increased risk of developing cancer. Having access to clean air is a human right.

To reduce levels of air pollution, we need to reduce our reliance on carbon as well as finding innovative solutions to air pollution.

One such innovative solution is to introduce the City Tree initiative, which is in many European cities such as Amsterdam, Brussels and London. The City Tree does the work of 275 trees in 1% of the space. Each tree holds 1,682 pots of moss, which extract particulate matter, soot, dirt and other pollutants from the air.

This Council agrees that a report be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee which will identify sites in each quarter of the city that are heavily polluted, explore the costs associated with the purchase of the trees and the potential public-private partnership in regards to the advertising space which comes with the tree, which could be used to offset the cost of the purchase.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor O’Hara.

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

Pridestrian Animation

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Garrett proposed:

“This Council recognises and values the huge contribution which our LGBTQ+ citizens make to the city of Belfast and beyond.

We commend the progressive approach taken by Belfast City Council in its support of Belfast Pride, the bid to secure Euro Pride, the illumination of and the flying of both the Rainbow and the Transgender Flags at the City Hall.

Building on this progressive approach and, as a demonstration of our continued solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community, including our commitments to create a city that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all, we call on this Council to follow best practices elsewhere throughout the world in the creation of permanent Rainbow Pride themed animation.

We call on this Council to directly engage with the Department for Infrastructure and other Government departments, where, in partnership with the Council, we create permanent animation at appropriate points

along the Pride Parade route ahead of the 2020 Pride festival. This should include, but not be limited to, pedestrian crossing points and public realm points along the route.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Flynn.

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

Homelessness

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Corr proposed:

“This Council notes that today, 2nd December, marks the start of Homelessness Week and acknowledges the fact that the right to a home is a basic human right. It commends the ambition set out within the Belfast Agenda to build 1,800 social homes by 2021 and calls upon the Council to scope all publicly-owned sites and land within the city boundary, to ascertain their potential for building homes on them. We support that public housing continues to be a priority within the Belfast Agenda.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Garrett.

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

Lord Mayor
Chairperson