

Council

SPECIAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall on Thursday, 25th September, 2014
at the hour of 4.30 p.m., pursuant to Notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
(Councillor Mallon) (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Hendron);
the High Sheriff (Alderman L. Patterson);
Aldermen M. Campbell, Kingston, R. Patterson,
Rodgers and Stoker;
Councillors Austin, M. E. Campbell, Clarke,
Convery, Corr, Cunningham, Curran, Garrett,
Hussey, Hutchinson, Jones, Kelly, Kennedy,
Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhín, McCabe, Newton,
Ó Donnghaile, Ó Muilleoir, Spence, Thompson
and Verner.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Aldermen Ekin, Robinson and Webb and Councillors Beattie, Haire, Magee, McCarthy and McVeigh.

Visit of Mayor of Boston

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, the Council met to mark the first visit to Belfast of Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston, since the signing in May, 2014 of the Belfast-Boston Sister Cities Agreement.

The Lord Mayor welcomed Mayor Walsh to the meeting. She reminded the Council that Belfast had a longstanding relationship with the city of Boston through, for example, the Belfast-Boston Friends of Belfast initiative, and paid tribute to her predecessor, Councillor Ó Muilleoir, and Mayor Walsh for the significant role which they had played in establishing the Sister Cities Agreement. She pointed out that the Agreement provided an opportunity for the cities to develop linkages in areas such as economic development, trade and investment, culture, health sciences and education and that it was evidence of the success of the Council's International Relations Framework and its Investment Programme.

The Lord Mayor explained that the Council was looking forward to developing the structures required to support the Sister Cities Agreement, through the establishment in each city of a Belfast-Boston Board in order to promote the relationship and to develop an annual action plan of agreed activity. She pointed out that she would, on 21st and 22nd October, be attending the 5th EU-US eHealth Marketplace and Conference in Boston and that she was looking forward to meeting with companies from the health, finance and technology sectors who had invested in Belfast, on the basis of the skills, quality of life and competitive economic environment offered by the City.

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Mayor Walsh thanked the Lord Mayor for the opportunity to address the Council in his role as the Mayor of Boston and commended it on the significant work which it had undertaken in recent years to regenerate the City. He referred to the close links which existed already between the two cities and confirmed that, following discussions with Councillor Ó Muilleoir, during his term as Lord Mayor, he felt that it was only appropriate that the first Sister Cities Agreement to be signed by him since attaining Office should be with the city of Belfast. The Agreement, he pointed out, represented an ideal opportunity for the cities to build upon their relationship through mutual co-operation. He informed the Council that he would, over the course of his visit to Belfast, be meeting with businesses within, amongst others, the technology, science and IT sectors, which reflected the growing reputation of the City as a major economic and investment centre. He concluded by stating that he was looking forward to welcoming the Lord Mayor and other Elected Members to Boston for the forthcoming EU-US eHealth Marketplace and Conference.

Representatives of each of the Political Parties on the Council welcomed Mayor Walsh to Belfast and outlined areas which would benefit potentially as a result of the Belfast-Boston Sister Cities Agreement, including, culture and tourism, economic investment, education and community planning.

Lord Mayor
Chairman