

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Wednesday, 4th October, 2023 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy) (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Hanvey, Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCormick, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKeown, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Murray, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, Ó Néill, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan), Alderman Copeland and Councillor McMullan.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Doherty declared an interest in the item “West Wellbeing Suicide Prevention” in the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that had formerly been a Board Member in that organisation. He also declared an interest in the item “Sustainable Period Product Scheme” within the People and Communities minutes, in that he had previously collaborated with the Council and the community at Foodstock in relation to period products.

Councillor Ferguson declared an interest in the item “Update on Area Working Groups” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in so far as it related to the refurbishment of the Belfast Orange Hall under the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, on the basis that he was a member of Duke of Schomberg LOL 486, which held meetings in the building. He also declared an interest in respect of the same item in that he was a shareholder in Glentoran Football Club and was a Committee Member of Nettlefield Multisports facility.

Councillor Doran declared an interest in the item “Update on Area Working Groups” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in so far as it related to the refurbishment of the Belfast Orange Hall under the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, and he was a Member of the Orange Lodge.

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Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy),
Seconded by Councillor Black and

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

Official Announcements

Congratulations

Alderman Lawlor congratulated Men's Minds Matter in Tullycarnet on its one year anniversary and highlighted the importance of encouraging anyone struggling with their mental health to reach out for help.

He also commended Tullycarnet Community Football Club on its 20th anniversary and paid tribute to the great work which it had carried out in the local community over that time.

Councillor Bell congratulated all those who had participated in and managed the 33rd Good Relations Week. At the request of the Member, the Lord Mayor agreed to send a letter of congratulations to those who had organised the series of events.

Councillor Ferguson commended the Council on having been nominated for an Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Service award and, despite not winning, that it had been great to see the City hold such a successful conference and awards ceremony.

Councillor McCormick highlighted that World Mental Health Day would take place the following week.

Councillor G. McAteer thanked the Council for its agreement to light up City Hall, on Sunday, 8th October, for Dyslexia Awareness Day, which would bring Dyslexia Awareness Week to a close.

**Request to Host an Event for the U.S.
Special Envoy to Northern Ireland**

The Chief Executive advised the Council that he had received a request to host an event for Mr. Joseph P. Kennedy III, U.S. Special Envoy to Northern Ireland for Economic Affairs, on 24th October. He outlined that it would form part of his investor visit, for up to 250 people, and that the Party Group Leaders and the Committee Chairs would be invited to attend.

The Council acceded to the request, noting that it would be financed from within existing budgets.

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Request to Address the Council

The Chief Executive advised the Council that the item had been removed from the agenda.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Black
Seconded by R-M. Donnelly

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

Amendment

**Organisational Reviews - Democratic Services
and Equality and Diversity Units**

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

Resolved – that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee outlining how the Council conducts organisational reviews, setting out a Terms of Reference, along with options for both an internal and an external review into the process.

Update on Area Working Groups - East

In response to a Member's query, the City Solicitor confirmed that there was no legal impediment regarding the £8,000 of funding to expedite the new toilet facilities at the Cregagh Wanderers container and that the refurbishment could proceed.

Update on Area Working Groups - North

Moved by Councillor Whyte,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite

That the decision in respect of the Malgrove project be brought back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in order to consider the reallocation of funding.

On a recorded vote, five Members voted for the proposal and fifty-one against and it was accordingly declared lost.

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For 5	Against 51
Councillors de Faoite, Doherty, Lyons, McKeown, and Whyte.	The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy); Aldermen Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers; Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Hanvey, Kelly, Long, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McCabe, McCormick, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McDowell, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Murray, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, Ó Néill, Smyth, Verner and Walsh.

The Chief Executive agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee outlining the accounting treatment in relation to the allocation of funding for BIF.

Contracts Update - Retrospective Single Tender Actions

In response to a request from a Member, regarding the recent failure and subsequent replacement of boilers at two Council sites, the Chief Executive agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting in respect of a conditions survey of the Council's major pieces of equipment.

Contracts Update – Single Tender Actions

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

Resolved – that, in the interest of full scrutiny, future reports on Single Tender Actions (STA) include more detail for the Committee to consider; and that the proposed STA relating to the “Supply, delivery and commissioning of replacement illuminate lighting fittings and ancillary equipment as part of the PPM maintenance programme”, of up to £60,000, be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

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Motion – Save West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness

In response to a request from a Member, the Chief Executive agreed that a letter would be issued to West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness to clarify the Committee's decision in respect of potential future funding.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd September were approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Murray
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 6th and 12th September, be approved and adopted.

Waste Update

In response to a Member's request, it was agreed that a list of the streets which officers had identified as the most affected would be circulated to the Members.

**Update on Local Government
Regional Resilience Function**

At the request of a Member, the Chief Executive agreed to consider whether the function would continue reporting through the People and Communities Committee or whether it would fall within the remit of the Climate and City Resilience Committee.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th and 12th September were approved and adopted.

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Nic Bhranair
Seconded by Councillor R-M. Donnelly

That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 13th September, be approved and adopted.

In response to a Member's query, the Chief Executive agreed to consider, in conjunction with the City Solicitor, any internal measures which could be taken in respect of Members posting restricted information on social media, particularly when there were commercial sensitivities.

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Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 13th September, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor McKeown
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 20th September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Garrett
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 19th September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor R-M. Donnelly
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 14th September, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor McDonough-Brown
Seconded by Councillor McCormick and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 26th September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Motions

Pavement Parking

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

“That this Council notes that inconsiderate pavement parking affects everyone in Belfast, but disproportionately children, people with visual impairments,

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mobility aid users, neurodiverse people and people with prams or pushchairs; and therefore it is essential that the Council plays its full role in reinforcing the message that pavements are for people and it is never acceptable to park in a manner which forces people off a footway and into the road. This Council acknowledges the challenges in solving this issue but resolves to work towards stopping vehicles from blocking pavements through inconsiderate or dangerous parking, including by undertaking a public information campaign about the negative impacts of pavement parking in its forthcoming communications.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Nelson.

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

Right to Food Campaign

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

“This Council recognises the impact the scourge of food poverty is having on families right across our city, made worse by the cost-of-living emergency and recent price rises and gives its formal backing to the Right To Food campaign, joining cities like Liverpool and Manchester in becoming a Right To Food city.

We believe that the British Government and any restored Executive must prioritise food poverty, implementing a range of new measures including universal free school meals, support for community kitchens and enshrining the Right To Food for all through legislation.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McCusker.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Flynn

Seconded by Councillor Smyth

To insert the following two paragraphs after the first paragraph:

“This Council also notes the School Holiday Food Grant was a crucial element of government support to tackle child food insecurity, targeted at those most in need, and helped struggling families cover the cost of food at times when their children did not have access to Free School Meals.

This Council will write to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Education calling for the urgent restoration of the School Holiday Food Grant Scheme, and to request that the Department protect and prioritise the needs of the most disadvantaged children and young people when making decisions regarding the allocation of its resources.”

The Proposer of the motion agreed to the amendment.

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After discussion, the following motion, as amended below, was put to the meeting and passed:

“This Council recognises the impact the scourge of food poverty is having on families right across our city, made worse by the cost-of-living emergency and recent price rises and gives its formal backing to the Right To Food campaign, joining cities like Liverpool and Manchester in becoming a Right To Food city.

This Council also notes the School Holiday Food Grant was a crucial element of government support to tackle child food insecurity, targeted at those most in need, and helped struggling families cover the cost of food at times when their children did not have access to Free School Meals.

This Council will write to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Education calling for the urgent restoration of the School Holiday Food Grant Scheme, and to request that the Department protect and prioritise the needs of the most disadvantaged children and young people when making decisions regarding the allocation of its resources.

We believe that the British Government and any restored Executive must prioritise food poverty, implementing a range of new measures including universal free school meals, support for community kitchens and enshrining the Right To Food for all through legislation.”

Lord Mayor
Chairperson