

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall
on Monday, 1st December, 2025 at 6.00 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

Councillor R-M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, Duffy, Groogan, McCabe and Verner declared an interest under item "Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting of 10th November" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that their employers were in receipt of PEACEPLUS funding.

Councillor Beattie declared an interest under item "Update on Hardship Programme 2025/26" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his employer operated a family support hub.

Councillor de Faoite declared an interest under item "Planning Information" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that he was a member of the Board of Governors for Forge Integrated Primary School.

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Councillor Flynn declared an interest under item “Request from Commonwealth Games Northern Ireland” within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that he was a member of Archery Great Britain and Archery Northern Ireland.

Councillor Long declared an interest under items “Motion - Together: Building a United Community Strategy” and “Draft Amenity Bye Laws” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his wife was the Minister for Justice.

Councillor R. McLaughlin declared an interest under item “Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG)” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his partner was a Minister in the NI Executive.

Councillor Verner declared an interest under item “Update on Hardship Programme 2025/26” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that her employer operated a family support hub.

Councillor Whyte declared an interest under item “Housing Association Grant (HAG) Update” within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee minutes, in that he worked with a number of Housing Associations and the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations.

Minutes of the Council

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Council of 3rd November, 2025, be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

Congratulations

Alderman Lawlor expressed his congratulations to Linfield Football Club and Mr. D. Johnston, the Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner, for running a successful veterans remembrance reception event at Windsor Park.

Councillor I. McLaughlin congratulated the volunteers of Clarendon Development Association who had recently been awarded the King’s Award for Voluntary Service and the Lord Mayor acceded to his request to write a letter of congratulations.

Councillor McAteer congratulated Ms. Rachael Davison, Centre Manager for Walkway Community Association on 25 years of community work and the Lord Mayor acceded to her request to write a letter of congratulations to Ms. Davison.

Councillor R-M. Donnelly congratulated Naomh Owen and Slaughtneil GAA clubs on their recent success in the Ulster Hurling Championship.

Councillor Long offered his congratulations to Councillor Bower on the recent birth of her fifth child.

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Councillor Murray congratulated the Oh Yeah Centre on receiving an award at the recent Aisling Awards.

Councillor R. Brooks attended the Pride of Place Awards with Councillor Carson and congratulated those who contributed to Belfast winning the Community Youth Initiative award. She also congratulated GLL and Templemore Baths for their recent win at the Aisling Awards.

World Aids Day

To mark World Aids Day, Councillor Murray thanked Positive Life NI for the work it did to promote a positive future for people living with or affected by HIV in Northern Ireland.

Condolences

Councillor M. Donnelly offered his condolences to the family of Mr. Paddy McStravick, founder of Newhall Football Club, following his recent passing and the Lord Mayor acceded to his request to write a letter of sympathy to his family and Newhill Football Club.

Change of Positions of Responsibility

The Chief Executive stated that notification had been received from the Democratic Unionist Party and Alliance Party, indicating that they wished to make the following changes to Positions of Responsibility:

- Councillor Cobain to replace Councillor R. Brooks as Chairperson of the People and Communities Committee;
- Councillor Ferguson to replace Alderman McCoubrey as the Deputy Chairperson of the Climate and City Resilience Committee;
- Councillor McCormick to replace Councillor Ferguson as the Deputy Chairperson of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee;
- Councillor Nelson to replace Councillor McDonough-Brown as the Deputy Chairperson of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
- Councillor Murray to replace Councillor McDonough-Brown on the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee; and
- Councillor McDonough-Brown to replace Councillor Murray on the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

The Council noted the changes.

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Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Brennan,
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st November, omitting the item under the heading “Update on Standing Orders” which had been called in in accordance with sections 41(1)(a) and (b) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, and matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.”

Physical Programmes Update

Amendment 1

Moved by Councillor McCoubrey,
Seconded by Councillor Verner

“That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st November under the heading “Physical Programmes Update” in so far as it relates to Fernhill House, be rejected and accordingly, the project be moved to Stage 3.”

On a vote, thirty-one Members voted for the amendment and twenty-nine against and it was declared carried.

Amendment 2

Moved by Councillor Brennan,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

“That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st November under the heading “Belfast Stories Update” be amended to provide that the Council ceases the design development of the enhanced studio and event space provision (including use as a Media Production Studio) for the Belfast Stories scheme.”

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

Draft Amenity Bye Laws

Amendment

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Long, and

Resolved – “That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st November under the heading “Draft Amenity Bye Laws” be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.”

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**Requests for use of the City Hall
And the provision of Hospitality**

Amendment

Moved by Councillor McKay,
Seconded by Councillor Black, and

Resolved – “That the decision under the heading “Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality” be amended to provide that a report be brought to the Committee that would provide an update on Council investigations into incidents which had occurred during the provision of hospitality and use of the City Hall.”

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st November, were thereupon approved and adopted.

People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Cobain,
Seconded by Councillor R. Brooks,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 5th and 26th November, be approved and adopted.

Belfast Boxing Strategy 2025/26

Amendment

At the request of Councillor I. McLaughlin, in respect of the item under the heading “Belfast Boxing Strategy 2025/26”, the Chief Executive agreed a report would be brought to the next meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that would provide legal advice on the Equality Commission report and the legality of pausing or conditioning the Boxing Strategy Funding.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 4th and 18th November, were thereupon approved and adopted.

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City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor I. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Duffy,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 5th and 26th November be approved and adopted.

Housing Association Grant (HAG) Update

Amendment

At the request of Councillor R. McLaughlin, the Council agreed that the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 5th November under the heading "Housing Association Grant (HAG) Update" be amended to provide that a report be brought back to the Committee at its meeting in January, that would outline potential impacts of the reduction to the Housing Association Grant rate on the delivery of social housing.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 5th and 26th November, were thereupon approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Doran,
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

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

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 11th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

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

Moved by Councillor Hanvey,
Seconded by Councillor Bell and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 10th November, be approved and adopted.

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor M. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 6th November, be approved and adopted.

Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 20th November, be approved and adopted.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson