

Council

MONTHLY MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall on Monday, 4th November, 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, Rodgers and Spence; and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Black, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, Donnelly, Dorrian, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Graham, Groogan, Groves, Hanvey, Hargey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, McAllister, McAteer, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Mulholland, Murphy, Newton, Nicholl, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillor de Faquite.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in relation to the motions on Alcohol Misuse and Reshaping Breast Assessment Services, on the basis that they involved issues of policy which were relevant to the work of his employer, and left the Chamber whilst they were being debated.

Councillor Whyte declared an interest in relation to the motion on Reshaping Breast Assessment Services, in that the company in which he was employed provided event management services around the public consultation, and left the Chamber whilst it was being discussed.

Minutes of the Council

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 1st October and the special meetings of 1st and 11th October be taken as read and signed as correct.

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Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor referred to the forthcoming marriage of the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds) and wished him and his fiancée, Eileen, every happiness for the future.

The Lord Mayor agreed, in response to a request from Councillor Mulholland, to extend on behalf of the Council his condolences to the family of local filmmaker, Mr. Matt Curry, who had died on 31st October.

At the request of Councillor Pankhurst, the Council condemned the recent attack on cleansing staff in North Belfast and assured them of its ongoing support.

At the request of Councillor Beattie, the Council condemned the recent threats made to Ulster Unionist Party staff in the north of the City.

At the request of Councillor Graham, the Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Mr. Rory Best, who had retired recently from professional rugby, on his illustrious career and wished him well for the future.

Councillor Flynn welcomed the passing of the 21st October deadline, in the context of introducing abortion services and same-sex marriage to Northern Ireland.

In response to Councillor Magennis, the Lord Mayor agreed to forward on behalf of the Council a letter to Irish boxer Ms. Katie Taylor congratulating her on becoming a two weight World Champion and to Belfast boxer Mr. Ryan Burnett, who had been forced to retire prematurely due to injury, wishing him well for the future.

At the request of Alderman Rodgers, the Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, extended his sympathy to the family of Mr. Leonard Pugh, the founder of the City of Belfast School of Music, who had died on 31st October.

The Lord Mayor agreed, in response to a request from Councillor Lyons, to extend his condolences on behalf of the Council to the family of local poet and novelist, Mr. Ciaran Carson, who had died on 6th October.

At the request of Councillor Carson, the Lord Mayor agreed to forward on behalf of the Council a letter of congratulations to Ireland's Women's Hockey Team on its achievement in qualifying for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Change of Membership on Committee

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from the Alliance Party indicating that it wished to replace Councillor Nicholl with Councillor Hanvey on the Planning Committee.

The Council approved the change.

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Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor T. Kelly,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 25th October, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Amendment

**Requests for the Use of the City Hall
and the Provision of Hospitality**

Moved by Alderman Rodgers,
Seconded by Alderman Kingston and

Resolved - That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 25th October, under the heading "Requests for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality", insofar as it relates to the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra's 65th Anniversary celebration event in October 2020, be amended to provide that the Council agrees to waive the room hire charge.

Amendment

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Active Belfast Limited Board**

Moved by Councillor Matt Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Hargey,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 25th October, under the heading "Minutes of the Meeting of the Active Belfast Board", be amended to provide that the Council agrees to reject the 2% – 3% increase in leisure charges, as approved by the Active Belfast Limited Board and noted by the Committee.

On a recorded vote, fifty-six Members voted for the amendment and none against and it was declared carried.

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<u>For 56</u>	<u>Against 0</u>
The Lord Mayor (Councillor Finucane); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford); Aldermen Copeland, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Spence; and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Black, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, Donnelly, Dorrian, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Graham, Groogan, Groves, Hanvey, Hargey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, McAllister, McAteer, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Mulholland, Murphy, Newton, Nicholl, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.	

Submission of Report

The Council noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to charges for the use of leisure facilities across the City generally.

Amendment

**Business Rates Review –
Consultation Response**

Moved by Councillor Matt Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson and

Resolved - That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 25th October, under the heading “Business Rates – Consultation Response”, be amended to provide that the Council agrees to request the Department of Finance to extend the deadline for the submission of responses until after the General Election.

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Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 25th October were thereupon approved and adopted.

Motion – Economic Future Development

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the minute of the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September, under the heading “Motion – Economic Future Development”, which had been called in, be approved and adopted.

On a recorded vote, twenty-five Members voted in favour of adopting the minute and twenty-eight against, with four “no votes”, and, accordingly, the Council did not adopt the minute.

<u>For 25</u>	<u>Against 28</u>	<u>No Vote 4</u>
The Lord Mayor (Councillor Finucane); and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Black, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Groves, Hargey, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, McAteer, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Walsh and Whyte.	The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford); Aldermen Copeland, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Spence; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Dorrian, Graham, Hanvey, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, Mulholland, Newton, Nicholl, Pankhurst and Verner.	Councillors Flynn, Groogan, O’Hara and Smyth.

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 8th October be approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Hargey,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

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Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th and 23rd October be approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor Garrett and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 15th October, 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 Mulholland,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 3rd October be approved and adopted.

Brexit Committee

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 14th and 24th October be approved and adopted.

Notices of Motion

Alcohol Misuse

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

“Alcohol misuse has been described by Belfast Coroner Joe McCrisken as the biggest health problem in Northern Ireland. Over the past decade the number of alcohol-related deaths has increased by almost 50% and 12,000 people are admitted to hospital each year with alcohol-related problems.

Evidence indicates that Minimum Unit Pricing of alcohol is the most effective way to reduce alcohol-related harm.

This Council calls for legislation to introduce Minimum Unit Pricing and, to that end, will seek a meeting with the Permanent Secretary, Department of Health.”

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The motion was seconded by Councillor Lyons.

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

Arrest and Imprisonment of Catalan Political Leaders

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Matt Collins proposed:

"This Council notes with great concern the recent arrest and imprisonment of Catalanian political leaders and wishes to extend its solidarity to Catalan citizens living in Belfast.

The Council opposes these arrests and demands that the Spanish authorities end violence and criminalisation directed at the peaceful Catalan struggle for justice and immediately rescind jail sentences imposed by the Spanish Supreme Court on Catalan representatives.

The Council calls also on the European Union to end its complicity with the Spanish government's violent repression, denial of democratic rights and imprisonment of Catalan leaders.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to write to the Spanish government and to the European Union to relay this position."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Ferguson.

At the request of Councillor McLaughlin, the proposer agreed to amend the final paragraph of his motion to reflect that, in terms of the European Union, the Council would write to the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Parliament.

On a recorded vote, thirty-eight Members voted for the motion, as amended, and none against, with fifteen "no votes", and, accordingly, the motion was carried.

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For 38	Against 0	No Vote 15
<p>The Lord Mayor (Councillor Finucane); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Black, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Groves, Harvey, Hargey, Heading, Howard, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Magee, Magennis, McAllister, McAteer, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Mulholland, Murphy, O'Hara, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.</p>		<p>The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford); Aldermen Copeland, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Spence; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Dorrian, Graham, Hussey, T. Kelly, Newton, Pankhurst and Verner.</p>

Ban on Hunting with Dogs and use of Snares

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

“This Council notes with concern that hunting with dogs remains legal in Northern Ireland and is still used in the barbaric practice of pursuing and killing live animals. It further notes that snares are still being used to capture and kill wildlife.

The Council believes that the selling and use of snares for capturing or killing animals should be banned outright and agrees that legislation should be brought forward to ban hunting with dogs in Northern Ireland. It, therefore, resolves to write to the Permanent Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, outlining these concerns and requesting that preparatory work be undertaken to enable the relevant laws to be changed to reflect this.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McKeown.

At the request of Councillor Hussey, the proposer agreed to amend his motion to provide for the addition of the following wording after the final paragraph:

“The Council notes also that the Republic of Ireland continues to permit hare coursing and that its Government actively funds and licenses organisations which engage in this barbaric practice and further notes that the affected animals routinely move between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

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The Council, therefore, resolves to write also to the appropriate minister within the Government of the Republic of Ireland urging them to follow Northern Ireland's example and ban hare coursing".

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

"This Council notes with concern that hunting with dogs remains legal in Northern Ireland and is still used in the barbaric practice of pursuing and killing live animals. It further notes that snares are still being used to capture and kill wildlife.

The Council believes that the selling and use of snares for capturing or killing animals should be banned outright and agrees that legislation should be brought forward to ban hunting with dogs in Northern Ireland. It, therefore, resolves to write to the Permanent Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, outlining these concerns and requesting that preparatory work be undertaken to enable the relevant laws to be changed to reflect this.

The Council notes also that the Republic of Ireland continues to permit hare coursing and that its Government actively funds and licenses organisations which engage in this barbaric practice and further notes that the affected animals routinely move between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The Council, therefore, resolves to write also to the appropriate minister within the Government of the Republic of Ireland urging them to follow Northern Ireland's example and ban hare coursing."

Reshaping Breast Assessment Services

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

"This Council notes with grave concern the public consultation 'Reshaping Breast Assessment Services', the first draft report of which is due in the coming weeks.

It notes also that the plans contained within the consultation could lead to the closure of two breast clinic services, including the centre at the Belfast City Hospital, and that the closure of a local, highly effective centre would have a devastating impact on women in surrounding communities who rely on this lifesaving service. In particular, detrimental and discriminatory impact would be felt by those who cannot travel further for treatment because of age, economic, physical or mental health reasons.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to write to the Department for Health and to the Secretary of State adding its input to the consultation responses,

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stating that it recognises the incredibly high level of care and the ground breaking work in the Belfast Breast Screening Centre.

Also, the Council agrees, within the correspondence, to object in the strongest terms to the suggestion that this vital service could be lost from the Belfast City Hospital and to the suggestion that any reduction in Breast Screening Services could be made across the region, and requests an urgent cross-Party meeting with the Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, to discuss the issue.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Michael Collins.

At the request of Alderman Rodgers, the proposer agreed to amend the final paragraph of her motion to reflect that the Chief Medical Officer would be invited also to attend the cross-Party meeting.

The motion, as amended, was thereupon put to the meeting and passed.

Briefing Session

At the request of Alderman Kingston, the Council agreed that representatives of the Department of Health be invited to attend a briefing session in order to provide an update on the wider work being undertaken around the transforming of healthcare services.

“Parenting in the Picture” Campaign

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

“Following on from the 20th year of Parenting Week, this Council recognises the vital importance of parents to society.

Furthermore, it notes with concern that 82% of parents indicated in the most recent “Big Parenting Survey”, that they felt that parents do not receive enough support.

In order to bring attention to and in an attempt to redress this, the Council formally supports Parenting NI’s “Parenting in the Picture” campaign and pledges to work towards implementing the promises and commitments contained in this campaign.

To do this, the Council commits to conducting an audit of the existing initiatives which it delivers to support parents, with a view to working with the voluntary and community sector, as well as other partners, to explore if such initiatives may be improved, as well as seeking to bring forward new programmes to support our parents.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Smyth.

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

Unregulated Car Washes

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

“This Council expresses concern about unregulated car washes and calls for a detailed report to be prepared on the number of unregulated car washes across Belfast. The necessary investigation and production of the report to be led by Council officers and to involve experienced staff from all relevant statutory bodies, in particular, the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The Council requests that the report cover all aspects of unregulated car washes, including potential human trafficking, employee contracts and wages, environmental and health and safety issues.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Graham.

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

**Nutrition Support for Children
in Out-of-Hours School Clubs**

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

“Practical healthy eating, supported by positive influence around lifelong food choices, improves children’s wellbeing in physical and mental terms, including their ability to concentrate and learn.

Good nutrition is essential for children to grow properly, do their best in school and be healthy and happy in the future. (Education Authority).

A World Health Organisation commission has described childhood obesity as a ‘growing epidemic’. Department of Health survey statistics indicate that 25% of children in this region are deemed to be overweight or obese. The estimated costs of healthcare attached to weight problems are around £450 million, representing 2.8% of total healthcare expenditure.

Small changes across a range of arenas can help to turn the tide. Implementing healthy snack choices, as part of the daily routine, significantly increases the capacity of positive choices becoming embedded, ultimately, resulting in wider savings to the health sector.

Belfast City Council supports a range of services and programmes for children, including Summer Schemes and Out-of-Hours School Clubs in areas facing disadvantage and food poverty.

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Such spaces provide daily opportunities for children to undertake physical activity, learning and play. It is worth noting the capacity for such spaces to further improve the health of children via the provision of small healthy snacks.

It is within this Council's gift to contribute to the improvement of quality of daily life for children and to cement children's positive relationship with food and nutrition.

Accordingly, the Council agrees that a report, looking at clubs located in areas of disadvantage and the potential for such spaces to incorporate healthy snacks, as part of out of school hours provision during both term and non-term time, be prepared."

The motion was seconded by Councillor McAteer.

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

Action on Avoidable Winter Deaths

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

"In December last year, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) published Excess Winter Mortality figures for the period 2017/18, which revealed the second highest recorded number of excess winter deaths in the north of Ireland since data began in 1974/75. Furthermore, these shocking statistics recorded that the number of excess winter deaths in the north had more than doubled since 2015.

The 2017/18 statistics record that 1,500 people died, who were classed as Excess Winter Deaths, and, of these, 22% or 320 people were from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. These deaths are avoidable winter deaths and even one is too many. Unfortunately, it is our citizens aged over 65 who are most affected, particularly those vulnerable elderly people aged 85+.

The increase in winter deaths is widely understood to be down to the flu and spells of very cold weather, yet these deaths are avoidable. A combination of high energy prices, fuel poverty, ill health, low income and poor housing can make winter a dangerous time for many older people.

As we await the NISRA figures for 2018/19 and approach the upcoming winter, this Council will do all in its power to effectively act on avoidable winter deaths. The Council welcomes the joined up multi-sectoral approach that will focus on preventing avoidable winter deaths through Belfast's Community Planning Process and agrees to convene and facilitate a meeting of Belfast's community, voluntary and social enterprise agencies which focus on protecting and supporting older vulnerable people, to

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identify, develop and support innovative programmes that can be deployed and co-ordinated to prevent avoidable deaths in our city over the upcoming winter.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Black.

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

**Management of Communal Areas
and Open Space in Developments**

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

“This Council is concerned by the impact on new and long term homeowners of property management fees for the upkeep of open spaces and communal areas in housing estates.

We recognise that the Council has a role to play in this through the planning process and call upon it to develop a framework around the management of open space and communal areas and explore the possibility of how we can regulate the property management sector.

We further call upon the Council to engage with relevant parties such as the Law Society in the carrying out of this work.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Beattie.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the Planning Committee.

New Year Event

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

“This Council notes the huge success of our Hallowe’en Monster Mash event.

As a regional capital city, the Council agrees to hold on an annual basis a similar event to celebrate the New Year. The event will appeal to all our citizens and visitors, enhancing the appeal of Belfast as a welcoming and diverse city.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Verner.

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

Lord Mayor
Chairperson