

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held Remotely via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 1st July, 2020
at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

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

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCusker, and Councillor Heading.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Flynn declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "Recovery Programme", in relation to the waiving of fees for St. George's Market Traders, on the basis that he was a member of the Market Traders Federation, and he left the meeting whilst it was under discussion.

Councillor McDonough-Brown also declared an interest in respect of the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "Recovery Programme" in relation to the possible weekend closure of the Ormeau Road, in that his employer the Royal Society of Ulster Architects had been lobbying for the closure of the Ormeau Road, and he left the meeting whilst the item was under discussion.

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Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey),
Seconded by Councillor Kyle and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Annual meeting of the Council of 1st June and the Special meeting of 8th June be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, extended his condolences to the family and friends of Noah Donohoe following his recent untimely death and paid tribute to the people of North Belfast and the search and rescue team. Representatives of all Parties also expressed their sympathy.

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Black,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th June, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Dual Language Street Signs Policy

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th June, under the heading "Dual Language Street Signs Policy", be amended to proceed with the original motion, as proposed by Councillor Wash and seconded by Councillor McLaughlin at the February 2020 meeting of Council, namely for the Council to amend its Irish language street signage policy to the following:

- i. continue with the 1/3rd of the eligible electorate in the street to initiate the process;
- ii. change the policy to reflect that it will be the majority of respondents to the survey that will decide if the process has been successful. Therefore, it will be 50% +1 of respondents that will determine if the petition to erect bilingual signage has been successful. Non-respondents will not be considered as a negative response; and

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- iii. those respondents who respond as 'Don't Care' are not considered to be a negative response and will be treated as a void vote.'

On a vote by show of hands, twenty-five Members voted for the amendment and thirty-three against and it was declared lost.

Dual Language Street Signs Policy

At the request of Councillor Ferguson, the Chief Executive confirmed that the further legal advice to be submitted to the Committee would include the views of the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ).

Amendment

Recovery Programme (Temporary Road Closures)

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Pankhurst,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th June, under the heading "Recovery Programme", be amended to provide that the temporary road closures, as outlined in the third bullet point, should be expedited with the exception of public Translink Buses.

On a vote by show of hands, nineteen Members voted for the amendment and thirty-eight against and it was declared lost.

Amendment

Recovery Programme (Temporary Road Closures)

Moved by Councillor T. Kelly,
Seconded by Councillor Brooks,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th June, under the heading "Recovery Programme", be amended to remove the final paragraph under the third bullet point, and to add the following *"And to also consult locally on any proposals relating to the Ormeau Road and any other arterial route before adopting a Council position."*

On a vote by show of hands, seventeen Members voted for the amendment and thirty-eight against and it was declared lost.

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Recovery Programme (Temporary Road Closures)

At the request of Councillor O'Hara, the Council agreed that the list of temporary road closures be amended to also include Union Street, between Donegal Street and Little Donegal Street, under the third bullet point.

At the request of Councillor McMullan, the Council agreed that the first paragraph, under the third bullet point, in relation to the Council writing to the Department for Infrastructure seeking to expedite the temporary road closures be amended to include consultation with disabled people and older people, for example, The Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC).

Amendment

Recovery Programme (St. George's Market fees)

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor O'Hara,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th June, under the heading "Recovery Programme", be amended, under the first bullet point, in relation to the decision not to waive the stall fess for market stall holders at St. George's Market, to agree to bring back a paper on the cost of waiving the stall fees for market stall holders at St George's Market and to enter into discussions with the stall holders around their proposals to assist with the economic recovery of the Market.

The proposer agreed, at the request of Alderman Rodgers, that the Council should also invite a deputation of Market Stall Traders to discuss the issue at the next Committee.

Resolved - That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th June, under the heading "Recovery Programme", be amended, under the first bullet point, in relation to the decision not to waive the stall fess for market stall holders at St. George's Market, to agree to submit a report on the cost of waiving the stall fees for market stall holders at St George's Market to the next Committee and to enter into discussions with the stall holders around their proposals to assist with the economic recovery of the Market and also invite a deputation of market stall traders to the Committee to discuss the matter.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing additions and amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 19th June were thereupon approved and adopted.

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Chief Executive's Decisions taken under Delegated Authority

People and Communities Committee

Amendment

'Wild Light's Show' – Botanic Gardens, December 2020 – January 2021

Moved by Councillor Smyth,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,

That the decision of the Chief Executive of 9th June, under the heading "Wild Light's Show' – Botanic Gardens, December 2020 – January 2021", be amended to provide that an environmental assessment be carried out before the September 2020 meeting of the People and Communities Committee, and reported back to that Committee, instead of closer to the date of the event. We are becoming more increasingly aware of light pollution and the impact it can have on wildlife habitats. Therefore, it is imperative that this Committee is given a clear understanding of the environmental impact of this event and that it is solely not left to Council officers. Fees charged and permission for use of the facility should also be based on the outcome of a full environmental assessment outlined in any potential risk to local environment and habitats. This should be clearly outlined to the Committee before any decision is made on permissions for use or fees charged to the organisers.

On a vote by show of hands, thirty-eight Members voted for the amendment and eighteen against and it was declared carried.

Adoption of Decisions

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the decisions of the People and Communities Committee of 9th June, taken by the Chief Executive, in accordance with the authority delegated by her by the Council on 16th March, 2020, be approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Resolved – that the decisions of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 10th June, taken by the Chief Executive, in accordance with the authority delegated by her by the Council on 16th March, 2020, be approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Resolved – that the decisions of the Licensing Committee of 17th June, taken by the Chief Executive, in accordance with the authority delegated to her by the Council on 16th March, 2020, omitting matters in respect of

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which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Resolved – that the decisions of the Planning Committee of 16th June, taken by the Chief Executive, in accordance with the authority delegated to her by the Council on 16th March, 2020, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Brexit Committee

Amendment

Update on the Negotiations between the UK and the EU on their future

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Whyte,

That the decision of the Chief Executive of 11th June, under the heading “Update on the Negotiations between the UK and the EU on their future”, be amended to the following: the Council notes with dismay the failure of the UK Government to request for an extension to the Brexit transition period before the end of June deadline and agrees to write to the Prime Minister, Taoiseach, President of the European Commission and the EU Commission’s Chief Negotiator outlining our concerns; noting the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and the extreme challenges facing businesses and workers in the city; and requesting that the UK Government and the European Union work together to enable the extension of the Brexit transition period.

On a vote by show of hands, thirty-nine Members voted for the amendment and eighteen against and it was declared carried.

Update on implications of NI Protocol for Port Health Function

At the request of Councillor Walsh, the Council agreed to amend the minute of the meeting of 11th June, under the above mentioned heading, to provide that a report be submitted to the Committee on the impact that the recent reported changes to Larne Harbour would have on the Belfast Harbour, and to invite a deputation from the Harbour Commissioner and DAERA to present at a future Committee meeting to discuss the matter.

Adoption of Decisions

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the decisions of the Brexit Committee of 11th June, taken by the Chief Executive, in accordance with the authority delegated by her by the Council on 16th March, 2020, be approved and adopted.

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Notices of Motion

Black Lives Matter

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

“This Council loudly condemns the disgraceful racist murder of George Floyd and expresses support and solidarity to the Black Lives Matter movement globally in its pursuit of justice and against racism in all of its forms.

The Council is also deeply concerned at the manner in which members of the BAME community were treated by the PSNI for attending socially distant protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement in Belfast and Derry, on 6 June 2020. This treatment included fines, cautions and threats of prosecutions.

The Council notes that human rights organizations including Amnesty International and the Committee for the Administration of Justice, have expressed serious concern about police actions on the day. Further notes the disproportionate police approach compared with other gatherings, events, and indeed instances at workplaces, where minimal levels of social distancing have occurred.

This Council opposes the fines and does not support any future prosecutions arising from these protests in Belfast and Derry. Finally, the Council calls for the immediate implementation of a racial equality strategy which should be prioritised and invested in by government.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Ferguson.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Canavan,
Seconded by Councillor Magee,

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor Matt Collins and seconded by Councillor Ferguson be amended as **follows**:

“This Council loudly condemns the disgraceful racist murder of George Floyd and expresses support and solidarity to the Black Lives Matter movement globally in its pursuit of justice and against racism in all of its forms.

The Council is also deeply concerned at the manner in which members of the BAME community were treated by the PSNI for attending socially distant protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement in Belfast

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and Derry, on 6th June, 2020. This treatment included fines, cautions and threats of prosecutions.

The Council notes that human rights organizations including Amnesty International and the Committee for the Administration of Justice, have expressed serious concern about police actions **at socially distancing Black Lives Matter protests in Derry and Belfast.**

The Council notes that the Policing Board are conducting a thematic review of the policing response to Covid which will consider whether the operational use of the powers is in accordance with the law, is compliant with human rights and is being used proportionately. This Council further notes that the Police Ombudsman is commencing an investigation which will examine the issuing of fixed penalty notices served on members of the public at the Black Lives Matter protests at Customs House Square and the Guildhall Square on 6th June 2020.

This council supports the right of peaceful protest within the law.

Finally, the Council calls for the immediate implementation of a racial equality strategy which should be prioritised and invested in by government.”

The proposer agreed, at the request of Councillor Nicholl, to amend her proposal to provide for the addition of the following wording after the final paragraph:

“Finally, the Council calls for the immediate **update** on the **existing** racial equality strategy and **the implementation of a refugee integration strategy** which should **both** be prioritised and invested in by government.”

Councillor Brooks requested that the proposer agree to remove the term Black Lives Matter to be replaced by the following wording to the proposed amendment: “Black community and all those campaigning against the pursuit of racism.”

Councillor Canavan declined the request.

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

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor Matt Collins and seconded by Councillor Ferguson be amended as follows:

“This Council loudly condemns the disgraceful racist murder of George Floyd and expresses support and solidarity to the Black Lives Matter movement globally in its pursuit of justice and against racism in all of its forms.

The Council is also deeply concerned at the manner in which members of the BAME community were treated by the PSNI for attending socially

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distant protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement in Belfast and Derry, on 6th June, 2020. This treatment included fines, cautions and threats of prosecutions.

The Council notes that human rights organizations including Amnesty International and the Committee for the Administration of Justice, have expressed serious concern about police actions at socially distancing Black Lives Matter protests in Derry and Belfast.

The Council notes that the Policing Board are conducting a thematic review of the policing response to Covid which will consider whether the operational use of the powers is in accordance with the law, is compliant with human rights and is being used proportionately. This Council further notes that the Police Ombudsman is commencing an investigation which will examine the issuing of fixed penalty notices served on members of the public at the Black Lives Matter protests at Customs House Square and the Guildhall Square on 6th June, 2020.

This council supports the right of peaceful protest within the law.

Finally, the Council calls for the immediate update on the existing racial equality strategy and the implementation of a refugee integration strategy which should both be prioritised and invested in by government.”

On a vote by show of hands, the amendment was carried by 32 votes to 25 and duly passed as the substantive motion.

Suicide Awareness Training

Proposed by Councillor M. Kelly,

Seconded by Councillor Long,

“This Council recognises the Covid-19 pandemic will exacerbate the current mental health crisis in our City.

The Council previously agreed to work with others to make Belfast a Zero Suicide City to include challenging the taboos of mental health and suicide and ensuring that there is adequate training and resources for all the citizens so that Belfast can react positively to assist those in need.

All of us need to be aware of the signs and understand the questions to ask someone we are worried about and what help they can get. Therefore, Council agrees:

1. That Training in mental health and suicide intervention is crucial; therefore Council will investigate resourcing further SafeTALK and Mental Health First Aid training programmes for staff.

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2. To appoint mental health champions in each Council Department in to act as a point of contact for an employee who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress, helping the person get appropriate help, and also provide early intervention for someone who may be developing a mental health issue.
3. As a practical first step, to encourage Councillors and staff to undertake a short, free online course in Suicide Awareness training (developed by Mersey Care Foundation Trust and widely used across the NI Health and Social Care Trusts) – this teaches people how to recognise the warning signs and safeguard someone who could be contemplating suicide, talking openly to them and then directing them to appropriate services.”

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

Restoration and Listing of Historic Street Signs

Proposed by Councillor Hussey,

Seconded by Alderman Kingston,

“This Council:

1. notes the valuable contribution that Belfast’s historic tiled street signs make to the character of the areas in which they are situated and laments the loss of so many of these signs over the years.
2. further notes that a number of freestanding tiled street signs in Belfast have been listed and thereby protected from destruction or removal, but that most such signs have no protection at all.
3. requests its officers :-
 - a. to take all necessary steps to effect the repair and restoration of the freestanding tiled street signs identified below;
 - b. to take steps to identify other such signs and to take all necessary steps to effect the repair and restoration of those signs;
 - c. to request that the Department for Communities adds those signs which are of particular quality and merit to the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.
4. The street signs referred to above are situated at the junctions of :-
 - (a) Kensington Road/Knock Road.
 - (b) Cherryvalley Park/Kensington Road.
 - (c) Kingsden Park/Knock Road.

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- (d) Knockland Park/Barnett's Road.
- (e) Summerhill Parade/Barnett's Road.
- (f) Belmont Road/Massey Avenue [the unlisted sign].
- (g) Wandsworth Road/Belmont Road [2 signs].
- (h) Belmont Church Road/Sydenham Avenue.
- (i) Belmont Church Road/Belmont Road [the unlisted sign].
- (j) Eastleigh Drive/Kincora Avenue.
- (k) Clonlee Drive/Upper Newtownards Road.
- (l) Beersbridge Road/Upper Newtownards Road."

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

Opening our Streets for Everyone

Proposed by Councillor McKeown,

Seconded by Councillor Whyte,

"The coronavirus pandemic has shown that there is a real appetite among the people of Belfast to walk and cycle more, which is benefitting their physical and mental wellbeing. This energy and enthusiasm needs to be supported so it can be sustained.

While potentially transformative work is being undertaken by the Department for Infrastructure to install pop-up cycle lanes, pedestrianise streets and widen footpaths, there is a significant opportunity for Belfast City Council also to play its role in the recovery and the enhancement of our city by taking the car out of many of our streets.

The Council therefore agrees that a programme of temporary road closures be rolled out across the city on specific days, such as at weekends, in consultation with local communities, disability organisations and businesses. This will help in the recovery – socially, economically and environmentally – by making room for people to get around in a socially-distanced way, affording local businesses extra space to operate more safely, and supporting the move towards reduced car use and a cleaner, greener, healthier city for all.

To facilitate this in a managed way, the Area Working Groups will be reconvened remotely at the earliest opportunity to help identify potential sites in each part of the city. Any closures must not adversely impact residents, businesses, or people with a disability or accessibility issues. Closures must also take account of public and road safety."

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

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Littering

Proposed by Councillor Groogan,

Seconded by Councillor Smyth,

“This Council recognises the blight that littering across our city presents and the significant cost to the Council in dealing with it.

We commit to doing all in our power to reduce the instances of littering, to ensure adequate resourcing is put into enforcement and to enhance opportunities for people to properly dispose of waste whether on street, in our parks or public spaces. This council will commit to providing recycling bins in parks and public spaces and where appropriate, provide additional general waste bins in communities.”

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

Lord Mayor
Chairperson