

# Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 25th October, 2022

## MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

### HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Hanvey (Chairperson);  
Councillors Canavan, Corr, Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Gormley,  
Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, McAteer, McCabe,  
McCullough, McDonough-Brown, Pankhurst and Verner.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal  
and Civic Services  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors de Faoite and Flynn.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 27th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 3rd October.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Motions**

#### **Citizen's Forum for Belfast**

Moved by Councillor Duffy,  
Seconded by Councillor Corr,

That the motion in relation to a Citizen's Forum for Belfast be referred to the Council for debate, with no restrictions on the number of speakers.

On a vote, ten Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared carried.

### **Public Transport Network**

The Committee agreed that the motion in relation to Public Transport Network be adopted:

**Moved by Alderman Dorrian,  
Seconded by Councillor Spratt,**

**“That this Council reaffirms its support for the further development of the public transport network in the Greater Belfast area and calls upon the Department for Infrastructure and Translink to undertake a feasibility and cost study into the project known as the ‘Belfast Circle Line’, as part of the city’s vision for its continued growth and development.”**

### **Abortion Services**

Moved by Councillor Corr,  
Seconded by Councillor Duffy,

That the motion in relation to Abortion Services, be adopted.

### **Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,  
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the motion in relation to Abortion Services be referred to the Council for debate, with no restrictions on the number of speakers.

On a vote, five Members voted for the amendment and eleven against and it was declared lost.

The proposal standing in the name of Councillor Corr was put as the substantive motion and on a vote, eleven Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared carried.

A copy of the motion is set out hereunder:

**Moved by Councillor Ferguson,  
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,**

**“This Council notes the third anniversary of the decriminalisation of abortion which was marked by women and other activists in Belfast City Centre.**

**The Council also notes that services have yet to be officially commissioned despite the decriminalisation of abortion, and that the**

information provided on the Northern Trust website is unacceptably lacking.

This Council considers this inaction to be an abject failure on behalf of the Health Minister Robin Swann and the wider Executive, and recognises the urgency with which action needs to be taken.

Given the failure to provide adequate reproductive healthcare, this Council acknowledges both the detrimental impact on women on this city and the incredible work done by activists in organisations like Alliance for Choice and Project Choice, and charities like BPAS and Informing Choices in raising awareness of limited abortion access and providing that access for women who need an abortion.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to write to the Northern Trust to encourage it to provide more information about early medical abortion on their website, and to include the section on abortion on its 'A-Z of services' page.

The Council also agrees to write to Minister Swann to express our disappointment and urge him to convene an emergency meeting of the Executive to officially commission abortion services.

In the event that a prolonged period without Stormont Ministers looks likely, the Council finally agrees to write to the Secretary of State to act where possible to ensure abortion services are commissioned."

### **Belfast should join C40**

The Committee agreed that the motion in relation to Belfast should join C40 be adopted:

**Moved by Councillor Matt Collins,  
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,**

**"Belfast City Council notes that the C40 World Mayors Summit occurred between 19 – 21 October 2022 in Buenos Aires.**

**The Council notes that the C40 World Mayors Summit brings together the mayors of global and regional cities, alongside business leaders, philanthropists, campaigners, youth leaders, scientists and residents, to share bold ideas, showcase innovative solutions and stand together to create a sustainable, prosperous and equitable future.**

**This Council notes that it already supports the work of the Belfast Climate Commission and is part of the Place-based Climate Action Network ('PCAN').**

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The Council also notes that the C40 Leadership Standards are as follows:

**Plan:** City has adopted a resilient and inclusive climate action plan aligned with the 1.5°C ambition of the Paris Agreement, and updates it regularly;

**Deliver:** In 2024, city remains on track to deliver its climate action plan, contributing to increased resilience, equitable outcomes and halving C40's overall emissions by 2030;

**Mainstream:** City uses the necessary financial, regulatory and other tools at their disposal to address the climate crisis and mainstreams their equitable climate targets into the most impactful city decision-making processes;

**Innovate:** City innovates and starts taking inclusive and resilient action to address emissions beyond the direct control of the city government, such as associated with goods and services consumed in their city;

**Lead:** Mayor and the city demonstrate global climate leadership and inspire others to act in support of the Paris Agreement.

These Leadership Standards will guide C40's collective action until at least 2024.

The Council considers that this PCAN work would be enhanced by Belfast City Council applying to join C40 as an 'Innovator'. An 'Innovator' city is one that shows exceptional climate leadership at the global level, but do not meet the population/size criteria of a 'Megacity.'

Accordingly, the Council resolves to recommend to the Lord Mayor of Belfast that she apply on behalf of Belfast City Council and her office to join the C40 network and, in any event, adhering to the C40's leadership standards."

### **Rates Freeze**

The Interim City Solicitor advised that those parts of the motion which relate to a Council rates freeze were not competent as setting the rate is a legal obligation and must go through a process.

The Committee agreed that those paragraphs of the motion, deemed competent, in relation to writing to Stormont Ministers, the Secretary of State, and the Treasury, urging them to support a financial package of additional funding to local Councils and writing to all

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other councils asking them to adopt a similar position, be referred, in the first instance, to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Chairperson