

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held Remotely via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 1st October, 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; and
Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks,
Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins,
Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson,
Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Groves, Hanvey,
Heading, 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

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Whyte declared an interest in respect of the item contained within the minutes of the People and Communities Committee meeting of 8th September, under the heading "Belfast Healthy Cities - Contract Extension and Phase VII Application", in that a family member was employed by Belfast Healthy Cities, but was not required to leave the meeting as the item was not raised.

Councillor McDonough-Brown declared an interest in relation to the motion on Funding for the Arts and Creative Industries, in that his mother was the Chief Executive of the Arts Council for Northern Ireland, and left the meeting whilst the motion was being discussed.

Councillor Mulholland referred to the fact that she would, later in the meeting, be proposing a motion on Funding for the Arts and Creative Industries. She explained that she had been advised by the Town Solicitor that her role as a Youth Engagement Manager with the Oh Yeah Music Centre did not conflict with the content of the motion and, therefore, there was no requirement for her to declare an interest.

Councillor Long pointed out that his wife was the Assembly's Justice Minister and that, should any matters of a pecuniary nature be raised which fell within the remit of the Department of Justice, he would leave the meeting. However, as no matters were raised, he was not required to do so.

The following Members declared an interest in relation to the motion on a Pay Increase for Health Workers and left the meeting whilst the motion was being discussed:

Alderman Copeland – a family member is employed by the NHS;

Councillor Carson – a family member is employed by the NHS;

Councillor Corr – a family member is employed by the NHS;

Councillor Flynn – a relative is employed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;

Councillor Garrett – a family member is employed by the NHS;

Councillor Groves – works in a medical practice;

Councillor Heading – a relative is employed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;

Councillor Kyle – a relative is employed by the NHS;

Councillor Long – is employed by the NHS;

Councillor McKeown – is employed by the Public Health Agency;

Councillor McMullan – a family member is employed by the NHS; and

Councillor Smyth – is employed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The Council noted that, at its meeting on 1st September, Councillor McKeown had declared an interest in relation to the motion on Needle Exchange Facilities, on the basis that he was employed by the Public Health Agency, and had left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Minutes of the Council

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 1st September be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Mr. David Cook, a former Lord Mayor of Belfast, and confirmed that he had, on behalf of the Council, forwarded a letter to Mr. Cook's family expressing his deepest condolences.

Councillors Hutchinson, Long and Whyte highlighted the significant contribution which Mr. Cook had made over the course of his political career.

Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies

The Chief Executive informed the Council that notification has been received from the following Political Parties of proposed changes to Committees and Outside Bodies:

Alliance Party

- Councillor Nicholl to replace Councillor McReynolds on the Licensing Committee;
- Councillor McReynolds to replace Councillor Howard on the Eastside Partnership; and
- Councillor Nicholl to replace Councillor McDonough-Brown on the Forward South Partnership Board.

DUP

- Councillor Spratt to replace Councillor Pankhurst on the Brexit Committee; and
- Councillor Pankhurst to replace Councillor Spratt on the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Council approved the changes.

Minutes

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Black,
Seconded by Councillor Carson,

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th September, 2020, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Motion – National Armed Forces Day 2022

Moved by Councillor Pankhurst,
Seconded by Alderman Kingston,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th September, under the heading “Motion – National Armed Forces Day 2022”, be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees to approve the motion to bid to host Armed Forces Day 2022, with a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed to be brought back to the Committee.

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

<u>For 29</u>	<u>Against 30</u>
The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Hanvey, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, McAllister, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Nicholl, Pankhurst and Spratt.	Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Groves, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, O’Hara, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.

Amendment

Fleet Replacement Programme – Lord Mayor’s Car

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Alderman Dorrian,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th September, under the heading “Fleet Replacement Programme – Lord Mayor’s Car”, be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees that the Audi E-Tron be selected as the replacement vehicle for the Lord Mayor, as recommended within the Committee report.

On a recorded vote, thirty-three Members voted for the amendment and twenty-six against and it was declared carried.

<u>For 33</u>	<u>Against 26</u>
The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, McAllister, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Nicholl, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth and Spratt.	Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Gormley, Groves, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Walsh and Whyte.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Baker,
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers,

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th September, 2020 be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Alleygating Programme

Moved by Councillor McKeown,
Seconded by Councillor De Faoite,

That the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 8th September, under the heading "Alleygating Programme", be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees that officers identify potential funding streams for the specific model outlined in the original motion to Council and report back by the end of the calendar year on this and on potential mechanisms for the identification of sites, with a view to enabling the City to deliver green, sustainable, protected alleys for local communities, as part of the recovery.

On a recorded vote, twelve Members voted for the amendment and forty-four against, with two "no votes", and it was declared lost.

<u>For 12</u>	<u>Against 44</u>	<u>No Vote 2</u>
Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, De Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Heading, Lyons, McKeown, O'Hara, Smyth and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Groves, Hanvey, Howard, Hussey, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Long, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAllister, McAteer, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Mulholland, Murphy, Newton, Nicholl, Pankhurst, Spratt and Walsh.	Councillors Hutchinson and Kyle.

Gates at Cherryvale Park

In response to a query from Councillor Long, the Chief Executive confirmed that the consultation on the provision of a second access point to Cherryvale Park would be extended until 1st November.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th September were thereupon approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Brooks,
Seconded by Alderman Dorrian,

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th September, 2020 be approved and adopted.

EuroPride Bid (Belfast Pride)

Amendment 1

Moved by Councillor Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th September, under the heading “EuroPride Bid (Belfast Pride)”, be amended to provide that the Council agrees also to work with Belfast Pride to build capacity.

The Council agreed to vote on the amendment, when twenty-one Members voted for and thirty-seven Members against and it was declared lost.

Amendment 2

Moved by Councillor O’Hara,
Seconded by Councillor De Faoite,

That the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th September, under the heading “EuroPride Bid (Belfast Pride)”, be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees to use the Cultural Strategy’s sector development programme to provide support to Belfast Pride and LGBTQ sector organisations to review governance, address outstanding issues and ensure that the organisation is best placed to deliver projects of significant scale such as the EuroPride 2023 bid.”

The Council agreed to vote on the amendment, when forty Members voted for and eighteen against and it was declared carried.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th September were approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor Magennis and

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 16th September, 2020, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Hussey,
Seconded by Councillor T. Kelly and

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 2nd and 15th September, 2020, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Brexit Committee

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

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 10th September, 2020 be approved and adopted.

Amendment

UK Government Commitment to the NI Protocol

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,

That the decision of the Brexit Committee of 10th September, under the heading "UK Government Commitment to the NI Protocol", be amended to provide that the Council writes also to Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, expressing its support for the legal action being undertaken by the European Commission against the UK Government over its intention to breach its obligations under the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement by proceeding with the Internal Market Bill.

The Council agreed to vote on the amendment, when thirty-nine Members voted for and nineteen against and it was declared carried.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 10th September were approved and adopted.

Motions

Moratorium on Licences for Fracking and Exploration and Extraction of Fossil Fuels

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

"This Council recognises that we are in a climate emergency and, being aware of the environmental damage caused by fracking and all forms of exploration and extraction of fossil fuels, calls on the Minister for the Economy to place an immediate moratorium on all licences and further

calls on the Minister for Infrastructure to urgently implement changes to deny permitted development rights to any company seeking to prospect for oil and or/gas.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Garrett.

The proposer acceded to a request from Councillor Smyth to amend the motion to reads as follows:

“This Council recognises that we are in a climate emergency and, being aware of the environmental and public health damage caused by fracking and the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons, agrees to write to the Minister for the Economy and to the Minister for Infrastructure to establish their respective intentions regarding (i) the issuing of exploratory licences and (ii) the removal of Permitted Development Rights for hydrocarbon exploration which are currently provided for under Part 16 of the Planning Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The Council also calls upon the Northern Ireland Executive to place an immediate moratorium on all petroleum licensing and deny permitted development rights to any company seeking to prospect for oil and or/gas.”

The proposer acceded also to a request from Councillor Ferguson to replace the word “moratorium” with the word “ban” in the final paragraph of the motion.

After discussion, the motion, as amended, was put to the Council and passed as follows:

“This Council recognises that we are in a climate emergency and, being aware of the environmental and public health damage caused by fracking and the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons, agrees to write to the Minister for the Economy and to the Minister for Infrastructure to establish their respective intentions regarding (i) the issuing of exploratory licences and (ii) the removal of Permitted Development Rights for hydrocarbon exploration which are currently provided for under Part 16 of the Planning Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The Council also calls upon the Northern Ireland Executive to place an immediate ban on all petroleum licensing and deny permitted development rights to any company seeking to prospect for oil and or/gas.”

Funding for the Arts and Creative Industries

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

“This Council acknowledges the contribution of those employed in the Arts, Events and Creative Industries. It understands the impact that lockdown has had on these sectors; on theatres, museums, live music venues, comedy clubs, freelancers and individual artists and all other creative outlets that have been in the dark since March, with most having no finite indication of when their activities can recommence safely.

The Council welcomes the allocation of £29million by the Northern Ireland Executive to the Arts, Culture and Heritage sectors, as part of a £1.57 billion investment from the UK Government, purposefully designed to protect these world class industries across the UK.

The Council agrees to write to the Communities Minister, Carál Ní Chuilín, in support of the direct allocation of funds to those within these industries who have been most impacted. The Council agrees also to write to the Finance Minister, Conor Murphy, to encourage any further measures that can be taken to support and protect the creative sectors going forward.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Smyth.

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

Job Retention Scheme

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

“This Council notes that the end of the Job Retention Scheme, also known as the Job Furlough Scheme, will take place on 31st October, 2020.

The Council notes that this Government scheme has kept many people in employment and has eased the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on many businesses and services.

The Council further notes that the loss of this scheme and its proposed replacement will have a detrimental effect on local demand and supply of goods and services in Belfast and the wider economy.

The Council agrees, therefore, to write to the Minister for the Economy to ask that she investigate as a matter of urgency how to retain a Job Retention Scheme, including the earmarking of funds to minimise the impact of job losses in retail, hospitality and manufacturing, including the aviation industry.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Lyons.

The proposer agreed, at the request of Councillor Gormley, to amend his motion to read as follows:

“This Council notes that the end of the Job Retention Scheme, also known as the Job Furlough Scheme, will take place on 31st October, 2020. The Council also notes the ending of the existing Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) on the same date.

The Council notes that these Government schemes have kept many people in employment and have eased the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on many businesses and services.

The Council further notes the proposed replacement of these two schemes with a Jobs Support Scheme and an extended SEISS respectively. Both of these new schemes will run for six months from November 1st. These new schemes provide significantly less financial support than the original schemes and, as such, will have a detrimental effect on local demand and supply of goods and services in Belfast and the wider economy.

The Council agrees, therefore, to write to the Minister for the Economy to ask that she investigate as a matter of urgency how to retain a Job Retention Scheme and a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme at pre-October 31st levels, including the earmarking of funds to minimise the impact of job losses in retail, hospitality and manufacturing, including the aviation industry.”

After discussion, the motion, as amended, was put to the Council and passed.

Pay Increase for Health Workers

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

“This Council greatly appreciates and values the role of health workers for their bravery and contribution to work throughout the Covid crisis. The Council also recognises that many health workers have been underpaid for far too long and that this needs challenged immediately.

To this end, the Council gives its full support to the demand of health care workers and their trade unions for an immediate pay increase of between £2,000 and 15%.

The Council supports a significant pay increase for all frontline and essential workers.

The Council will invite local representatives of health and social care trade unions to speak about their pay, staffing demands and the challenges they face working in the health service.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Ferguson.

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

Racism Free Zone

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

“This Council recognises that racism is a scourge across this society. The Council further recognises the positive contribution made to society by those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds; deplores the discrimination which Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities regularly face; condemns racism in all its forms; and calls on the Council to work together with the sector, local BAME representative groups, schools and colleges, private businesses and public enterprises to ensure that this Council area becomes a racism free zone.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Garrett.

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

Review of Permission to Belfast City Airport to enter Victoria Park for the Management of Un-hatched Eggs under Licence from the NIEA

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

“This Council notes that the decision to grant Belfast City Airport permission to enter Victoria Park and carry out the management of the bird population, such as the pricking and oiling of un-hatched eggs, has significantly reduced the greylag goose population in the park.

The Council further notes that, as the decision to grant permission for this activity was taken a number of years ago, technology and practices pertaining to managing bird populations in the vicinity of an aerodrome may have moved on.

As such, the Council requests officers to carry out a review of this decision, engage with relevant environmental and wildlife organisations and produce a report for Members to consider options before the next confirmation of the permission is granted to the airport to carry out this activity in Victoria Park.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor M. Kelly.

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

Chairperson