

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall and also remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Monday, 4th October, 2021 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

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

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillor Ferguson.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mulholland declared an interest in relation to the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in relation to the Northern Ireland Music Prize. She was employed by the organisation which coordinated that prize.

Councillor Smyth declared an interest in relation to the item "Partner User Agreements" under the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that he was on the Committee of Rosario Youth Club. Councillor McKeown declared an interest in that his son was involved with Rosario Youth Club.

The following Members declared an interest in relation to the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 7th September, under the heading "Community Provision Grant Funding 2021/22":

- Alderman Kingston – worked part time for Forward South Partnership;
- Alderman Copeland – an organisation which her daughter worked for was in receipt of funding;

- Councillor Beattie - worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding;
- Councillor Black - managed Grosvenor Community Centre;
- Councillor Corr – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding;
- Councillor Donnelly – employed by the Upper Springfield Development Trust;
- Councillor Gormley - on the Board of the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group;
- Councillor T. Kelly – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding;
- Councillor McCullough – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding; and
- Councillor Verner - an employee of the Greater Shankill Partnership.

Minutes of the Council

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

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

Official Announcements

Congratulations

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, congratulated the Chief Executive on her recent appointment as the Chief Executive of the Jersey Civil Service. It was noted that the Chief Executive would be leaving the Council at the end of January 2022 to take up the post.

Letter from an Unaccompanied Child Refugee

The Lord Mayor read out a letter from a Children's Law Centre client who had arrived in Belfast eighteen months ago. He had expressed his love for the City and how he felt it was clean, well designed and safe, and that the people were friendly.

She explained that she had recently met with him and what a pleasure it had been to do so. She advised the Council that he was incredibly optimistic and that it was a real testament to what we all had to be grateful for in Belfast. She added that

there was a lot that Members could do in order to support newcomers to the city, especially through supporting the Children's Law Centre and in terms of seeking to reform immigration laws.

Expressions of Sympathy

Councillors McCabe and Lyons paid tribute to Mr. Anto Finnegan, the former Antrim Captain, who had passed away at the age of 48 following a battle with Motor Neurone Disease. Councillor McCabe asked that the Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, would write to extend her condolences to his wife, Alison, and his children, Conall and Ava.

Councillor Garrett paid tribute to his friend, Mr. Sean McGuinness, the former Antrim and Down hurling manager who had unfortunately passed away. At Councillor Garrett's request, the Lord Mayor agreed to send her condolence to his wife, Eileen, and their children Eileen, Colm, Orla, Sean Og, Clar Rois, Niall, Aisling and Emer.

Congratulations

Councillor McCabe requested that the Lord Mayor would pass on her congratulations to the Antrim Ladies Football Team, who had reached the All Ireland Final in Croke Park last month, and also to the Antrim Camogie Team, who had won the All Ireland Intermediate Title in Croke Park and had also won the Tesco All Ireland Cup. At her request, the Lord Mayor agreed to invite the teams to attend City Hall.

Spórtlann na hÉireann

Councillor Beattie advised the Council that the sporting facility on the Falls Road, on the site of the former Beechmount Leisure Centre, was at imminent risk of closure. He stated that an Irish Medium school had bought the site and had invested £7million into the facility. He advised the Council that, at that time, the Council had entered into a contract with Spórtlann to provide community use, which they had been doing since it opened. He added that the Council had, in 2009, agreed to provide a financial contribution to assist the facility but that the funding had not materialised. He requested that the Chief Executive would look into the situation urgently.

Thanks

Alderman Kingston thanked the Belfast City Marathon organisers and all of the volunteers for their hard work leading up to and on the day itself. He requested that the Lord Mayor would, on behalf of the Council, write to the Marathon Organising Committee to pass on her appreciation.

Violence Against Women and Girls

Councillor Mulholland referenced the recent sentencing of the murderer of Sarah Everard in England. She explained that the issue of violence against women and girls had been brought to the fore and that it had great ramifications at all levels of society. She stated that it was crucial for the Council to assess what progress had been

made in order to make them feel safer within our city and that there were tangible actions which everyone could take. She particularly encouraged the male Members to undertake the upcoming "Bystander Training", facilitated by Women's Aid, on Wednesday, 6th October.

Request to Address the Council

Universal Credit - Women's Support Network

The Chief Executive advised the Members that a request to address the Council had been received in relation to the motion on Universal Credit.

The Council acceded to the request and Ms. Siobhan Harding, Women's Support Network, was welcomed to the meeting.

Ms. Harding advised the Council of the devastating impact that the forthcoming cut, of £20 per week, to Universal Credit would have for thousands of people across Northern Ireland. She explained that while £20 per week might not sound like much to some, it was a significant amount of money to those on the lowest incomes.

She outlined that it was used for necessities such as putting food on the table, heating the house, buying food or winter coats or putting petrol in the car in order to get to work. She highlighted that gas prices were set to rise by 33% in the greater Belfast area.

She emphasised the impact that it would have on lone parents and that 84,000 children would be impacted by the cut. She outlined that 10% of children in N.I. were defined as living in a food insecure household.

She explained that the cut would amount to a loss of over £700,000 per week, or just under £37million per year, to the Belfast economy. She added that Resolution Foundation research had shown that the cut would hit 36% of non-pensioner households in N.I., the highest of all the UK regions.

She advised that N.I. had larger family sizes, with twice as many large poor families as Scotland and the South East of England. The Council was advised that analysis carried out by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission had shown that the overall cash impact of welfare reform had been more negative for women than men, especially for lone parents. N.I. also had differing childcare support with families here spending a greater proportion of their incomes on childcare than in the rest of the U.K.

She welcomed the latest interventions by the First Ministers of the devolved administrations, and by the Minister for Communities who had all written to the UK Government urging them to reverse the cut. She advised that she wanted to see the NI Executive put welfare mitigations on the agenda urgently to close the loopholes and extend the mitigations as they were vitally important payments in tackling hardship and poverty.

The Lord Mayor thanked Ms. Harding for her presentation.

The Council noted the information which had been provided and that it would have an opportunity to discuss the issue later in the meeting.

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Alderman Kingston

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24th September, 2021, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading 'Consultation on Signage - Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres – Options Paper', which was subject to a valid call-in requisition and is not before the Council for approval and adoption, and those matters which are delegated to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Residual Waste Contract Arrangements

Amendment

In response to a query from Councillor Michael Collins, the Chief Executive confirmed that the minutes could be amended to clarify that the Council would be using the Cottonmount Landfill site in Mallusk for the interim arrangement and not the Mullaghglass site.

Further Amendment

Moved by Councillor Baker,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

Resolved - that a letter be sent to Arc21, and to the Chief Executive of each Council which has a contract with Arc21, to state that there should be no extension the contract at Mullaghglass Landfill Site beyond January 2022.

Request for Matter to be Taken Back to Committee

Assets Management – (ii) Beechvale Farm

Moved by Alderman Rodgers
Seconded by Alderman Copeland and

Resolved - That the minute under the heading "Assets Management – (ii) Beechvale Farm" be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Amendment

Bonfire Procedures

Moved by Councillor McAllister,
Seconded by Councillor Long,

“That this Council will conduct an immediate review of the 2021 bonfire season, to be completed in time for the Committee meeting in November, to include Elected Representatives, statutory agencies and bonfire builders, in order to highlight issues which will need to be addressed.

The Council agrees to write to the Executive Office asking for the FICT report to be published, along with an action plan, as this will help inform the Council’s view moving forward.”

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

Subject the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24th September were thereupon approved and adopted.

Delegated Decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee 20th August: Minute Standards and Business Committee

The Lord Mayor advised the Council that the decision of 20th August in relation to the Standards and Business Committee was subject to Call-in. The legal opinion had

been circulated and had concluded that the Call-in did not have merit. Therefore, the decision was before the Council for ratification.

Moved by Councillor Walsh,
Seconded by Alderman Kingston,

That the delegated decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th August, 2021, in relation to the "Update on Standards and Business Committee", be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor McAllister,
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,

That the Council rejects the decision of 20th August, 2021, in relation to the "Update on Standards and Business Committee".

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

<u>For 21</u>	<u>Against 37</u>
The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, M. Kelly, Lyons, McAllister, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, O'Hara and Smyth.	The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.

The proposal standing in the name of Councillor Walsh was thereupon put to the Council and agreed.

Appointment of Members to the Standards and Business Committee

The Council agreed the following Membership of the Standards and Business Committee for Year 3 of the Council Term, 2021/2022 and noted the appointment of the Members to the positions of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

1	Sinn Fein	Councillor Black (Deputy Chairperson)
2	Sinn Fein	Councillor McCabe
3	Sinn Fein	Councillor Corr
4	Sinn Fein	Councillor Gormley
5	Sinn Fein	Councillor McAteer
6	Sinn Fein	Councillor Canavan
7	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Bunting
8	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor T. Kelly
9	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor McCullough (Chairperson)
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Kingston
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Pankhurst
12	Alliance Party	Councillor McAllister
13	Alliance Party	Councillor McDonough-Brown
14	Alliance Party	Councillor M. Kelly
15	Progressive Unionist Party	Councillor Kyle
16	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Lyons
17	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor de Faoite
18	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Copeland
19	Green Party	Councillor Groogan
20	People Before Profit Alliance	Councillor Ferguson

People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Cobain,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting

That the minutes of the meeting of the People and Communities Committee of 7th September be approved and adopted.

Alleyway Transformation Scheme Pilots

Amendment

Moved by Councillor M. Kelly,
Seconded by Councillor Newton and

Resolved - That the City Solicitor would consider any potential legal action that the Council could take against other bodies for their failure to take action in respect of unadopted alleyways.

The Lord Mayor added that she would be hosting a session with “9ft in Common” about the transformation of alleyways across the city and she encouraged the Members to attend.

Amendment to the Minutes

The Chief Executive advised the Council that the Committee decision in respect of the item would have to be amended, as the Area Working Groups did not have decision making powers, and that the Council could not delegate that power to them. She requested that the Council consider amending the decision to the following:

“The Committee agrees to the delivery of a number of pilot alleyway transformation schemes throughout the city and further agrees that consideration would be given by the Area Working Groups to the area selection; the number of pilots; the detail of intervention and the flexibility of approach in terms of how funding would be allocated, which would then be subject to final decision by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.”

The Council agreed to adopt the amended wording for the decision.

Ormeau Park BMX Track

At the request of Councillor McKeown, the Chief Executive confirmed that the report which was to be submitted to a future meeting would include other non-mainstream sports such as skateboarding, table tennis and basketball.

Community Provision Funding Update

(Those Members who had declared an interest in this item left the meeting for the duration)

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Garrett
Seconded by Councillor Maskey

To agree to extend the existing Community Development Grants' Funding Agreements for Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Buildings and Advice to 31st March, 2023, as per the September Committee report.

At the request of Councillor Bunting, Councillor Garrett agreed to accept the following addition to his proposal:

and that a further report, on capacity building and potential further funding for other groups, be submitted to the Committee in November.

On a vote on the amendment standing in the name of Councillor Garrett, as amended by Councillor Bunting, twenty-two Members voted for the amendment and twenty against, and it was declared carried.

The amendment was thereupon put to the Council as the substantive motion.

Further Amendment

Moved by Councillor Flynn
Seconded by Councillor Mulholland

That the issue be brought back to the Committee for further reconsideration.

On a recorded vote on the amendment standing in the name of Councillor Flynn, twenty Members voted for the amendment and twenty-two voted against, and it was declared lost.

<u>For 20</u>	<u>Against 22</u>
The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, M. Kelly, Lyons, McAllister, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McReynolds, Mulholland, O'Hara and Whyte.	The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Dorrian, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Carson, Cobain, Garrett, Hussey, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McLaughlin, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt and Walsh.

(Those Members who had declared an interest in this item returned to the meeting at this point in proceedings)

Subject the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 7th September were thereupon approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Dorrian and

That the minutes of the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 8th September be approved and adopted.

Correspondence - Sunday Opening Hours

Councillor Hanvey referenced the letter which had been received from Belfast Chamber. He stated that the city centre was struggling as a result of the pandemic and requested that a focus be placed on street cleansing within the city centre in order to assist the businesses and to encourage more footfall into the city centre.

Amendment

International Engagement Activities

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Kyle,

To enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Confucius Institute and to provide financial support of £5,000 in respect of it.

On a recorded vote, seventeen Members voted for the amendment, twenty-nine against and 10 no votes, and it was declared lost.

<u>For 17</u>	<u>Against 29</u>	<u>No Vote 10</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner.	Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCusker, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, O'Hara, Walsh and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Harvey, Howard, M. Kelly, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, McReynolds and Mulholland.

Presentation - Transport Hub Alternatives Group

Councillor T. Kelly welcomed that Translink had recently engaged with the local community of Sandy Row by showing them a number of artefacts which had been uncovered on the site, and they had also been reassured that the Saltwater Bridge would remain in situ.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 8th September were thereupon approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers and

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee of 15th September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey and

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee of 14th September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Brexit Committee

Moved by Councillor Baker,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite and

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Brexit Committee of 9th September be approved and adopted.

Motions

Road Safety Review

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Black proposed:

“Communities around the City Centre, in all quarters of Belfast, face issues attached to commuter parking, high density traffic volumes and services proximity. The resulting infrastructural impacts include damaged road surfaces, outdated safety measures, inadequate parking controls and poor air quality. Such areas generally house dense residential communities including schools who are at the front line of daily road safety concerns.

The inner-city surrounding communities of Belfast are also dissected by the Westlink further straining the already at breaking point road capacity.

This Council has a duty of care to citizens and in the vein of the Belfast Agenda a commitment to ensure people can live in safety and with improved health outcomes. As such, this motion asks that a letter be sent to the Minister for Infrastructure to commission a road safety review of inner-city surrounding communities in all quarters of the City. This should include review of road surfaces, safety measures, parking restrictions and accident volume.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Garrett.

At the request of Councillor Hanvey, Councillor Black agreed to amend the last line to include “active and sustainable transport” as part the review.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Heading,

That the Motion standing in the name of Councillor Black be replaced with the following:

“Communities around the City Centre, in all quarters of Belfast, face issues attached to commuter parking, high density traffic volumes, services proximity and the legacy of division in the city. The resulting infrastructural impacts include poor access to dedicated public transit links, physical barriers to active travel, damaged road surfaces, outdated safety measures, inadequate parking controls and poor air quality. Such areas generally house dense residential communities, with poor access to private vehicles and high exposure to toxic emissions, including schools who are at the front line of daily road safety concerns.

The inner-city surrounding communities of Belfast are also dissected by the Westlink further straining the already at breaking point road capacity.

This Council has a duty of care to citizens and in the vein of the Belfast Agenda a commitment to ensure people can live in safety and with improved health outcomes. As such, this motion asks that a letter be sent to the Minister for Infrastructure to commission a road safety review of inner-city surrounding communities in all quarters of the City. This should include a review of active travel measures, dedicated public transit links, road surfaces, safety measures, parking restrictions and accident volume. A further letter should be sent to the Minister for Finance and the Executive Office, recognising the significant financial restraints placed on the Department for Infrastructure under existing budgetary allocations and supporting the establishment of an Infrastructure Commission alongside further budgetary allocation to fund the chance for change in communities like our inner-city.”

Councillor Black did not accept the amendment.

On a vote, thirty-five Members voted for the amendment standing in the name of Councillor de Faoite, nineteen against and one no vote, and it was declared carried.

The amended motion was thereupon put to the Council as the substantive motion and passed.

Electric Charging Ports

In accordance with notice on the agenda Alderman Dorrian proposed:

“This Council notes new legislation being brought forward in other parts of the United Kingdom requiring electric charging points to be included in

new home and office developments, and believes that this should be introduced in Northern Ireland at the earliest opportunity, in a partnership between the public and private sectors. The council will agree;

- I. To write to the Minister for Infrastructure outlining the council position and requesting the departmental position, including any discussions about this matter to date;
- II. To write to the Minister for Economy outlining the council position and requesting the departmental position, including in relation to how it may fit with the ongoing energy strategy consultation; and
- III. To Members receiving a report from the Council's Legal and Civic Services and Planning Departments indicating how this could be best considered in the criteria for planning applications."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Brooks.

At the request of Councillor McMullan, Alderman Dorrian agreed to the following amendment, to be inserted between Sections I and II:

"To write to the Minister for Finance, given that amendments to building regulations were part of his remit, and that it was essential that those amendments were made to ensure that every new home was installed with electric charging ports"

Councillor Michael Collins proposed the removal of the following in the first sentence "in a partnership between the public and private sectors", to instead be replaced with "to be led by an expansion of public sector investment".

Alderman Dorrian did not accept the amendment.

On a vote, twenty-six Members voted for the amendment standing in the name of Councillor Collins and thirty against, and it was declared lost.

The following motion, standing in the name of Alderman Dorrian, as amended by Councillor McMullan, was put to the meeting and passed:

"This Council notes new legislation being brought forward in other parts of the United Kingdom requiring electric charging points to be included in new home and office developments, and believes that this should be introduced in Northern Ireland at the earliest opportunity, in a partnership between the public and private sectors. The council will agree;

- I. To write to the Minister for Infrastructure outlining the council position and requesting the departmental position, including any discussions about this matter to date;

- II. To write to the Minister for Finance, given that amendments to building regulations were part of his remit, and that it was essential that those amendments were made to ensure that every new home was installed with electric changing ports;
- III. To write to the Minister for Economy outlining the council position and requesting the departmental position, including in relation to how it may fit with the ongoing energy strategy consultation; and
- IV. To Members receiving a report from the Council's Legal and Civic Services and Planning Departments indicating how this could be best considered in the criteria for planning applications."

Universal Credit

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Heading proposed:

"This Council recognises that the £20 Universal Credit uplift has provided a lifeline to many families and recognises the devastating impact that its proposed removal would have at this critical juncture of the recovery period when workers face the end of the furlough scheme and massive increases in energy bills.

The Council also recognises that the removal of the £20 per week payment will be devastating for those living here, will push more people into poverty, increase reliance on foodbanks, and increase homelessness, as well as having dire consequences for our local economy.

The Council calls on the Communities Minister, Deirdre Hargey, in the absence of any action from the Westminster government, to liaise with her colleague, Finance Minister, Conor Murphy, to uphold this uplift for the remainder of the financial year and commit to expediting a long term strategy to tackle the shameful levels of poverty and social deprivation across Belfast."

The motion was seconded by Councillor McCusker.

Councillor Heading requested to amend his motion to also include the addition of following wording:

"To write to the Prime Minister, asking him to strongly reconsider the removal of the £20 uplift in Universal Credit, and that the letter would be made available for all Members to sign through the Lord Mayor's office; and

To request that Members would attend the front gates of the City Hall at 8pm on Wednesday, 6th October, where the lights would be dimmed to mark the removal of the uplift in Universal Credit."

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

Tsar for the Holylands Area

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Groogan proposed:

“Following yet another turbulent Freshers Week in the Holylands, this Council regrets that little progress has been made to date on efforts to address anti-social behaviour and to bring forward a regeneration scheme for the area.

This Council will redouble its efforts to implement the recommendations of the Louise Browne and the Paddy Gray reports and calls on the NI Executive and the Universities to work together with us to establish a Tsar for the Holylands area in order to drive this work forward. This role will be properly resourced and empowered to work cross-departmentally and in conjunction with residents and other stakeholders in the area to achieve fundamental changes to the area.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McKeown.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay

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

This Council:

- i. Welcomes legislation at committee stage in Stormont for Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay;
- ii. Notes the Coalition for Bereaved Workers concern that this bill is a ‘missed opportunity’ and ‘does not go far enough’;
- iii. Will write to the Stormont Economy Committee to urge that they further the legislation on bereavement policy so that everyone who is bereaved of a close relative or partner is entitled to 2 weeks statutory bereavement leave and pay in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers campaign objectives; and
- iv. Will also undertake a review of its own bereavement policy, in conjunction with the unions, that seeks to establish 2 weeks statutory bereavement leave and pay for all Council workers in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers “Call to action” document.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Michael Collins.

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

York Street Interchange Project

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor O'Hara proposed:

“This Council notes that it is currently corporately committed to supporting the York Street Interchange project. This decision was made before this Council declared a climate emergency; before the NI Assembly declared a climate emergency and before the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Report published in August 2021, which was a 'Code Red' warning for humanity.

Belfast City Council is a key stakeholder in the York Street Interchange Project and sits on the Strategic Advisory Group for the York Street Interchange. We call on the Minister for Infrastructure to immediately share the Independent Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange with Belfast City Council. This will allow us to make an informed decision on whether we as a Council continue with our corporate support for this project.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McAllister.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Belfast City Night life and Night-time Economy

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor de Faoite proposed:

“Belfast City Council:

- i. Recognises the profound impact of the pandemic on the city's nightlife, music, arts and entertainment sectors and the night-time economy and acknowledges the actions of Council Officers to support a managed return of Belfast's nightlife in difficult circumstances;
- ii. Further recognises that, for many residents and visitors, Belfast at night may not feel safe or welcoming at present due to changes in behaviour and the use of space over the last 18 months;
- iii. Believes significant night-time challenges existed prior to COVID-19, including issues around licensing, policing, public safety, diversity, organisational and venue capacity, public transit and sustainability;
- iv. Further believes that the establishment of a vibrant, diverse and sustainable nightlife between 6pm and 6am will help us meet the objectives set out in the Belfast Agenda, including encouraging city centre living and creating a vibrant, well-connected environment for people to enjoy;

- v. Seeks to create a nightlife for the City which is inclusive of young people, women, LGBT+ people and ethnic minorities;
- vi. Believes that this work to establish Belfast's nightlife takes on a new urgency following the pandemic;
- vii. Notes that several cities have chosen to establish a nightlife co-ordinator including Dublin, London, Amsterdam, Washington D.C., New York, Paris, Zurich, Toulouse and Mannheim;
- viii. Shall convene a one day roundtable discussion about the future of Belfast's nightlife and the immediate challenges posed in the city between 6pm and 6am, with Elected Members, relevant Executive Ministers and political representatives, trade unions, public and private transport providers, artists, event organisers, venue owners, industry and consumer representatives, student unions, Belfast City Youth Council and non-profit organisations, including but not limited to Reclaim The Night, the Rainbow Project, Women's Aid and the SOS Bus; and
- ix. Agrees to establish a co-ordinator for Belfast's nightlife or "Night Mayor" who will co-ordinate the work of the Council and relevant partners in developing and promoting the city's nightlife and night-time economy following the roundtable discussion."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Smyth.

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

Environmentally Sustainable Event Spaces

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Garrett proposed:

"This Council has a long-standing track record of working with event promoters to host significant events and concerts within the Council's estate across the city.

The Council should be commended for the role it plays in facilitating and promoting a vibrant calendar of events within our estate.

As we look into the future, our position as a Council in declaring a climate emergency and the stark indications presented within Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report, we must find ways and offer solutions to mitigate against the catastrophic effects of climate change.

Making our event venues more environmentally sustainable, with access to clean energy (Electricity) and running water will help mitigate the necessity for Fossil Fuel energy combustion and plastic pollution derived from plastic products.

Therefore, this Council will commit to a timetable and plan for delivering the physical means for environmentally sustainable event spaces with Clean Energy (Electric) power sources and Running Water points to mitigate against plastic pollution.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Bradley.

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

Staff on Temporary Contracts

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor McLaughlin proposed:

“This Council is concerned to learn about the number of staff on temporary contracts that have worked for the organisation for many years.

These affected staff do not have job security, they can't plan their lives and they are constantly worried this temporary contract will be their last. We can and must do better for our staff. An organisation should be measured about how it treats its staff and if the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us anything it's the value of all our incredible hard working and diligent staff members who constantly go above and beyond for the citizens of this city.

As a result, this Council will obtain a legal opinion with a view to ascertaining if it is possible to establish that anyone on a temporary contract employed for 12 continuous months, regardless of job title, can have that contract made permanent if the staff member wishes to do so and, subject to that advice, the Council will put in place procedures enabling this to happen”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Murphy.

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

Community Wealth Building

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Murphy proposed:

“This Council:

- i. Recognises the economic disruption caused to communities across the district caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency, periods of economic recession, and Tory austerity;

- ii. Further recognises long-standing economic problems in the District, including inequality, low-paid employment, poor rates of socially ineffective investment, deprivation, and unsustainable levels of carbon emissions and ecological damage;
- iii. Commends Minister Hargey's intention to establish a departmental advisory group to embed and deliver Community Wealth Building which centres on: a more just and fair labour market; an inclusive economy with a focus on growing and rebuilding the local economy; and ensuring land and property in our communities generates wealth for the people who live there.

Therefore, this council commits to developing a fully funded community wealth building framework with the purpose of democratising the economy by empowering community organisations, non-profits, social enterprise and cooperatives to be established or expanded with the ambition to create employment and grow local economies.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Black.

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

Lord Mayor
Chairperson