

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall and also remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Monday, 1st November, 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, 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

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of Councillor Heading.

Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared an interest in relation to the motion, under the heading "Community Sector Terms and Conditions":

- Alderman Copeland – an organisation which her daughter worked for was in receipt of funding from DfC;
- Alderman Kingston – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding from the Department for Communities (DfC);
- Councillor Baker - member of the West Belfast Partnership Board;
- Councillor Beattie – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding from DfC;
- Councillor Black - managed Grosvenor Community Centre;

- Councillor Canavan – board member of the Greater Shankill Partnership Board;
- Councillor Corr – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding from DfC;
- Councillor Donnelly – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding from DfC;
- Councillor Garrett – member of the West Belfast Partnership Board
- Councillor Gormley - on the Board of the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group;
- Councillor T. Kelly – an organisation which her husband worked for was in receipt of funding from DfC;
- Councillor Kyle – Chair of the Lagan Village Youth and Community Association Board;
- Councillor Maskey – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding from DfC;
- Councillor McCabe – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding from DfC;
- Councillor McCullough an organisation which her daughter worked for was in receipt of funding from DfC;
- Councillor McLoughlin - member of the West Belfast Partnership Board;
- Councillor Mulholland – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding from DfC;
- Councillor Murphy – board member of the Ligoniel Improvement Association; and
- Councillor Verner – was an employee of the Greater Shankill Partnership.

Councillor Walsh declared an interest in relation to the item “Heritage Trail - Expression of Interest Submissions” under the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in so far as it related to the application to erect a James Connolly Heritage Trail Sign, on the basis that he was involved in that initiative, and left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

Clarifications

Councillor McCabe advised that the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 12th October omitted that she had declared an interest in the item under the heading “Community Provision Funding Update”, in that she worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding from DfC. The Council noted that minutes would be varied at the next Committee meeting.

Councillor T. Kelly highlighted that, the Declaration of Interest that she had made at the Council meeting of 4th October had been incorrectly recorded, in that, she worked for an organisation in receipt of funding, when she had declared that, her husband worked for an organisation in receipt of funding. The Council agreed that the minutes be varied accordingly.

Official Announcements

Congratulations

The Lord Mayor congratulated Councillor Pankhurst and his wife on their recent marriage and wished them the best for the future.

Councillor Smyth congratulated the East Belfast Camogs, who had reached the Down county final, and he praised the fantastic strides they had made in the past 18 months, since their formation, and the huge impact they had on sport in east Belfast.

Councillor Flynn welcomed the first Irish language school in east Belfast, situated on the Belmont road. He congratulated the pupils and parents and wished them the best for the term ahead.

Condolences

Councillor Ferguson highlighted the recent death, in Poland, of a 30-year-old woman, who had recently lost her life due to anti-abortion legislation. She stated that it was a timely reminder of the Council’s role to lobby the Executive, which had been debating a bill similar to the legislation in Poland, and she expressed her solidarity with the Polish community in Belfast.

COP26

Councillor O’Hara referred to the opening of COP26 and reported that a number of Members, along with a delegation from the Assembly and the Executive, had been due to attend. He stated that he hoped that the Members would be attending the rallies and events which supported COP26, in order to maintain pressure for immediate, urgent and substantial climate change action.

Awards

Alderman Kingston offered congratulations to those involved in the undernoted award nominations. He stated that it recognised the work being done by the city to create a liveable, inclusive city, building a reputation as a unique destination for investment, tourism and supporting inclusive economic growth:

- Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards – Belfast nominated for Council of the Year;
- Estate Gazette Awards – Belfast shortlisted for City of the Year Award; and
- Belfast Chamber Business Awards – GLL, Better Belfast – finalist for Social Enterprise Award.

He requested that the Lord Mayor would, on behalf of the Council, write to GLL and the Better Belfast team, to pass on her appreciation.

The Lord Mayor acceded to the request and offered further congratulations that Belfast had been honoured with a UNESCO Learning City Award for 2021, in recognition for its work promoting lifelong learning across the city.

Violence Against Public Servants

Councillor Matt Collins expressed his concern regarding the news that a bus driver had been intimidated off his bus by masked men who subsequently burned the bus. He offered solidarity with the Translink employee and stated that no one should be forced to deal with intimidation while undertaking their job to provide a service to the city. He stated that, the violent behaviour had to stop before someone was hospitalised or seriously hurt and that the Council should stand in solidarity with the employee.

The Lord Mayor concurred and conveyed her best wishes to the driver.

Letter from Hanna and Lucas McMullan

The Lord Mayor read out a letter from Hanna and Lucas McMullan, aged ten and seven years old, who had moved to Belfast in 2020. They expressed how they loved the city, however, they felt that a few improvements should be considered to help the environment. They suggested more electric cars in the city, that people should pick up the litter they drop and put it in a bin and, that people would buy and sell more non-plastic items.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl),
Seconded by Councillor Walsh,

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Monthly meeting of 4th October be taken as read and signed as correct, subject to the variation of the

minute under the heading Declarations of Interest to include correction highlighted by Councillor T. Kelly earlier in the meeting.

Minutes

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Alderman Sandford

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd October, 2021, be approved and adopted.

Update on Contracts

At the request of Councillor Garrett, the Chief Executive confirmed that a report would be brought back to the Committee, regarding the Council's use of advertising, which would detail how much was being spent and its benefits, as opposed to delivering direct services.

Update on Draft Amenity Bye Laws for the City Centre

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Kyle,

That the draft amenity bye laws for the city centre would be equality screened and brought back to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, in advance of the consultation process.

At the request of Alderman Kingston, Councillor Ferguson agreed to accept the following addition to her proposal:

That Members would receive Party group briefings on the proposals, in advance of the consultation process.

The amendment, standing in the name of Councillor Ferguson, as amended by Alderman Kingston, was put to the Council, and passed.

Heritage Trail - Expression of Interest Submissions

(Councillor Walsh, who had declared an interest in this item, left the meeting for the duration)

Amendment

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

That one collective sign be installed on the outer railings of City Hall for the promotion of up to nine heritage trails.

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

<u>For 18</u>	<u>Against 39</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Copeland, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, McCullough, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner	The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Howard, M. Kelly, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McAllister, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKeown McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, O'Hara, Smyth and Whyte.

(Councillor Walsh, who had declared an interest in this item returned to the meeting at this point in proceedings)

**Universal Basic Income – Proposed
Contribution to Feasibility Research**

Amendment

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

That the Council rejects the decision of the Committee to allocate £15,000 towards a feasibility study to develop a Universal Basic Income trial in Northern Ireland.

On a recorded vote, fourteen Members voted for the amendment, and forty-four against, and it was declared lost.

<u>For 14</u>	<u>Against 44</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Kingston, McCoubrey, and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Hussey, T. Kelly, McCullough, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner	The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Aldermen Copeland and Rodgers; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Howard, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McAllister, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKeown McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, O'Hara Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd October were thereupon approved and adopted, subject to the amendment in relation to the Draft Amenity Bye Laws for the City Centre

Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor McCullough,
Seconded by Alderman Kingston and

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 26th October, 2021, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted

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 12th October be approved and adopted.

Proposal for Dual Language Street Signs

Amendment

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

That the proposal to erect a second street nameplate in Irish at Clifton Street, be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Fifty-five Members voted for the amendment, with three no-votes, and it was declared carried.

Subject the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 12th October, were thereupon approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey

That the minutes of the meetings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 13th and 27th October be approved and adopted.

BRT Phase 2 - Draft Consultation Response

Amendment 1

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

That the Council response to the BRT Phase 2 Public Consultation would support the Shore Road route option (Shore Road to O'Neill Road), incorporating that the Council was not supportive of the introduction of a two-way system and associated adjacent halts in Donegall Place, and would not recommend that the Department for Infrastructure immediately introduce 12-hour bus priority lanes along all of the considered routes.

On a recorded vote, sixteen Members voted for the amendment and forty-two against, and it was declared lost.

<u>For 16</u>	<u>Against 42</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Copeland, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Hussey, T. Kelly	The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly,

McCullough, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner	Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Howard, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McAllister, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKeown McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, O'Hara, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.
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Amendment 2

Moved by Councillor O'Hara,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey and

That the Council response to the BRT Phase 2 Public Consultation would also include support for the installation of green or living roofs on all new Glider infrastructure stops along the north-south route.

The amendment was put to the Council and passed.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 13th and 27th October were thereupon approved and adopted, subject to the foregoing amendment

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers and

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee of 20th October, 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 Maskey and

Resolved - That the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee of 11th and 21st October, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Motions

Community Sector Terms and Conditions

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

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

“This Council commends and recognises the extraordinary efforts of the community sector during the emergency response period of COVID19. Their ability to react quickly and effectively during the first days of the pandemic and to assist and help the most vulnerable and those most in need in our society.

This council also recognises the challenges facing the community sector, particularly in relation to terms and conditions and salary levels, and agrees to write to the Minister for Communities and request a review been undertaken and actions identified to support and strengthen this valuable and essential Sector.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Pankhurst.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

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

Rent Controls

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

“This Council supports a system of rent controls in the City.

This council notes with grave concern the escalating prices of rents in all parts of Belfast, notes the failure of the executive to regulate the rental market and notes the significant additional number of students moving to the city with the relocation of the University of Ulster campus to North Belfast. This council is concerned about the increasing number of Houses

of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) spreading across the city, the escalation of living costs, while wages stagnate, and National Insurance contributions increase.

This council calls on the Executive to; immediately bring forward a Rent Control scheme for the City.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Groogan.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

COP26 - Global Day of Action –
6th November, 2021

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

“Council notes that:

1. The UN climate negotiations, known as COP26, will take place in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021.
2. Human-caused climate breakdown is leading to and exacerbating extreme weather events across the globe. The most recent IPCC Report warned that many of these changes are unprecedented, and some are already ‘irreversible’.
3. The IPCC has also warned of dire consequences of exceeding the 1.5°C global average temperature rise and called for halving of global carbon emissions by 2030, yet emissions have continued to rise; and current emission reductions pledges as part of the Paris Agreement will set us on a course for a disastrous 3.5 degrees of warming.
4. The climate crisis is a social justice issue, with those who have done least to cause the crisis facing the worst impact.
5. Wealthy, industrialised countries have a responsibility to take on their fair share of emissions reductions and need to increase targets for emission reductions by significantly investing in green energy, public transport, and retro-fitting of buildings, and by leaving fossil fuels in the ground.
6. We also face a global crisis of unemployment and that the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic represents an ideal opportunity to invest in climate jobs, a just transition, and a fairer society.
7. Significant pressure is needed from across society, including local government, to ensure real action is taken to stop a climate catastrophe.
8. The COP26 Coalition - with local hubs across these islands, including in Belfast - has issued a call for a Global Day of Action on 6 November, and a march has been called in Belfast accordingly, to demand action.

Council therefore resolves:

To support the march in Belfast on 6 November; to circulate to Council staff information about the march; to issue a press statement indicating its support for the march, as well as publicising the march details on all social media channels; and finally, to light up City Hall green on the evening of the 5 November, in anticipation of the march the following day.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Matt Collins.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Regulation of Airbnbs

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

“Council notes with concern the unregulated proliferation of Airbnbs and similar types of short-term lets in Belfast and the impact this is having on communities. In particular, council recognises the impact on residents through antisocial behaviour occurring at many such properties, the impact on the make-up and character of communities as properties previously used as residential homes are switched to short-term lets of this type, and the impact on both the affordability of properties and the availability of long-term tenancies in many areas.

Council therefore agrees to write to the Northern Ireland Executive requesting an urgent cross-departmental review of this issue, and the creation of a robust and effective regulatory and licensing system for properties intended for use as short-term lets of this type, including capacity to create areas of special concern where the number of properties authorised for such use can be capped to avoid an imbalance in housing diversity, affordability and availability.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McCusker.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson