

Standards and Business Committee

Thursday, 28th March, 2024

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOETELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor and McCullough; and
Councillors Bradley, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly,
Duffy, D. Douglas, Kelly, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, F. McAteer,
G. McAteer, McCormick, McDowell, R. McLaughlin and
McMullan.

In attendance: Ms. D. Murtagh, Divisional Solicitor;
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance
Manager, and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Groogan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd February were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th March.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Motions

The Committee considered the following three motions which had been received in advance of the Council meeting on 8th April:

Endorsement of Plant Based Treaty

Moved by Councillor M. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor Duffy,

That the motion be adopted.

The Committee agreed to adopt the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Doherty and seconded by Councillor McKeown:

“Belfast City Council endorses the Plant Based Treaty:

- Recognises the need to put food systems at the heart of combating the climate crisis and encourages a shift to healthier and sustainable plant-based diets, while simultaneously working to reverse the damage to ecosystems and biodiversity; and
- Agrees to write to the NI Assembly and call for a further endorsement of the Plant Based Treaty and for a greater commitment to further transitioning towards more sustainable plant-based food systems.”

Bilingual Signage at Weavers Cross

Moved by Councillor M. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor Bradley,

That the motion be adopted.

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

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to adopt the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor R. M. Donnelly and seconded by Councillor Ó Néill:

“Belfast City Council acknowledges the significant progress made in promoting the Irish language within our jurisdiction, including the formulation of a Language Strategy in 2018, the revision of the dual language street signage policy in 2022, and the formulation of a draft Irish language policy in 2024.

To further this commitment, the Council fully supports the installation of bilingual internal and external signage at Cros na bhFíodóirí - Weavers Cross - Belfast's new Grand Central Station.

As a result, this Council will also write to Translink urging them to install bilingual signage at Weavers Cross and to ask what steps they are taking to fulfil their obligations under the European Charter for Regional & Minority Languages and ensuring shared public spaces are welcoming and cater to the bespoke needs of the Irish language community.”

International Dark Skies Week

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor Maghie,

That the motion be adopted.

The Committee agreed to adopt the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Groogan and seconded by Councillor Smyth:

“We call upon the Council to pledge support for Belfast to be part of ‘International Dark Skies Week’ from 2nd to 8th April 2024.

This will coincide with public events that are part of Belfast 2024 project ‘Right to the Night’ led by artist Aisling O’Beirn and art organisation Household, including 2 guided night walks in North Belfast (one on shared reading and one on sense of smell);

Include participation in the week, raising awareness of the impact of light pollution on climate, environmental species and biodiversity, human sleep patterns and access to seeing the stars. Also raising awareness of solutions to protect dark skies while enjoying good outdoor lighting;

Will include the issuing of a statement that signals Belfast’s participation in the week and support by the Council; and

Request that the City Hall Lights be switched off on a date during that week.”

The Democratic Services and Governance Manager advised that the date for the lights to be switched off would be agreed in conjunction with facilities to ensure that health and safety requirements were met.

Chairperson