

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall
on Tuesday, 1st October, 2024 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Murray (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan);
The High Sheriff of Belfast, Councillor S. Douglas; and
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey,
McCullough and Rodgers; and
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black,
Bower, Bradley, Brennan, R. Brooks, T. Brooks,
Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins,
de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly,
R. M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, Duffy,
Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,
Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey,
McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCusker,
McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKay,
McKeown, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin,
Murphy, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, O'Neill, Smyth,
Verner 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 Walsh.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in agenda item 'Consultation on Policy Proposals underpinning a Public Health Bill for Northern Ireland' within the People and Communities minutes as he was employee of the Health Service and left the room whilst the item was being considered.

Councillor Nic Bhranair declared an interest in the aforementioned item and also in the agenda item 'Night-time Economy Notice of Motion Update' within the City Growth and Regeneration minutes as she was employed as a Special Advisor to a Minister in the Executive and she left the room whilst the items were under consideration.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murray),
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 2nd and the special meeting of the 18th September, be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

Retirements

The Deputy Lord Mayor informed the Council that Mr. Hugh Dickson, City and Neighbourhood Services Department, would be leaving the Council shortly having completed 25 years' service, and wished him well in his retirement.

Councillor Collins paid tribute to Mr. Gareth Graham, Democratic Services Assistant, who would be retiring at the end of October having completed 46 years' service and wished him a long and healthy retirement.

Councillor Black recorded her thanks to Mr. S. Caldwell, West Area Manager, who had retired last week. She also thanked Mr. G. Fusco, a Youth Worker within the Falls community who had also retired. She stated that the knowledge and commitment of both men would be greatly missed in their respective communities.

Congratulations and Thanks

Councillor Black congratulated the relevant Council officers on the recent unveiling, as part of the Council's Belfast 2024 celebration of culture, of the new mural to celebrate the Oscar-winning short movie an Irish Goodbye.

Councillor McAteer commended the work of the Youth Workers in East Belfast following a period of unrest in the lower Newtownards Road area.

Councillor Bell congratulated the Community Together Belfast Residents Association on the success of its recent Diversity Carnival Event.

The High Sheriff of Belfast, Councillor S. Douglas, referred to the recent Euro Cities Culture Forum Conference and paid tribute to the Council officers for the organisation of this successful networking event which had promoted the city in a positive light.

Change of Position of Responsibility

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from the Alliance Party that it wished to replace The Lord Mayor, Councillor Murray, with Councillor T. Brooks as its representative on the South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership (DPCSP).

The Council noted the change.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee and subject to the omission of the minute under the heading “Dual Language Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre” which has been ‘called-in’, be approved and adopted.

Sunday Trading – Pilot Scheme

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Smyth,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

“That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September, under the heading “Sunday Trading – Pilot Scheme”, be rejected in so far as it relates to a Sunday Trading Pilot Scheme and that the Council instead examine how it can emulate projects like Open Botanic in other parts of the city through the Car Free Sunday model and other similar projects.”

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

For (26)	Against (31)
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McCormick); The High Sheriff (Councillor S. Douglas); Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers; and Councillors R. Brooks, Bunting, Collins, de Faoite, Doherty, Doran, D. Douglas, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Kelly, Lyons, McCusker, McDowell, McKeown, I. McLaughlin, Smyth, Verner and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Murray); and Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, Brennan, T. Brooks, Canavan, Carson, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Garrett, Hanvey, Long, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McDonough-Brown, McKay, R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Nelson, Nic Bhranair and O’Neill.

At the request of Councillor Nelson, it was agreed that the Council would write to the Minister seeking changes to the legislation in relation to Sunday Trading laws, as had been agreed at the Committee.

Good Jobs Bill Consultation Committee Report

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite and

Resolved – “That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September, under the heading “Good Jobs Bill Consultation Committee Report”, be amended to reflect that consultation should be undertaken with USDAW on issues relating to Sunday trading, including but not limited to the Sunday Working (Scotland) Act 2003.”

Planning Update

At the request of Councillor R. McLaughlin, it was agreed that updates on major applications and applications that had been determined by the Planning Committee would be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on a monthly basis rather than quarterly as had been agreed previously.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September 2024 were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 3rd and 10th September, be approved and adopted.

Consultation on Policy Proposals underpinning a Public Health Bill for Northern Ireland

Amendment

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Councillor Brooks,

“That the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 10th September, under the heading “Consultation on Policy Proposals underpinning a Public Health Bill for Northern Ireland”, to endorse the consultation response and agree its submission to the Department of Health by the 14th October deadline, be rejected and that each Political Party would, if it so wished, submit its own response to the consultation.

On a vote, fifteen Members voted for the amendment and fifteen against, with twenty-four 'no votes'. There being an equality of votes, the Chairman exercised his second and casting vote against the proposal and it was subsequently declared lost.

Following debate regarding whether an individual Members vote had been recorded, the Lord Mayor agreed to permit the vote to be retaken. On a further vote, seventeen Members voted for the amendment and nineteen against, with twenty-one 'no votes' the amendment was declared lost.

Council's 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment for Ambient Air Quality

Following a request from Councillor T. Brooks seeking for the decision making in regard to the Air Quality Management Areas to be moved to the remit of the Climate and City Resilience Committee, the Chief Executive advised that a report was currently being compiled in regard to the governance arrangements of the Council's Standing Committees and he undertook to discuss the suggestion initially at a Party Group Leaders meeting.

In response to a query from Councillor Collins regarding the volume of complaints regarding air pollution in the Collin area emanating from a composting site, the Chief Executive advised that the relevant Council officer would speak to Councillor Collins directly to discuss the matter further.

Request for the use of Botanic Gardens For a Christmas Ice Experience

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor McKay, and

Resolved – "That the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 10th September, under the heading "Request for the use of Botanic Gardens for a Christmas Ice Experience" be taken back to the Committee for further consideration."

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 3rd and 10th September were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Nelson,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11th September, be approved and adopted.

Belfast City and Region Place Partnership Update

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,

“That the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11th September, under the heading “Belfast City and Region Place Partnership Update”, to approve the attendance by senior officers at MIPIM 2025 be rejected.”

On a vote, eight Members voted for the amendment and twenty-seven against, with twenty-one ‘no votes’, the amendment was declared lost.

City Centre Animation

Amendment

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

“That the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11th September, under the heading “City Centre Animation”, be amended to provide that the allocation of the £60,000 of available funding be used to establish a fund to which organisations could apply to for funding to provide animation projects, with all applications for funding to be scored and assessed using an appropriate scoring matrix”.

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

Night-time Economy Notice of Motion Update

At the request of Councillor Harvey, the Council agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure, John O’Dowd, seeking him to review the decision to put on hold the consideration of the pedestrianisation of Hill Street.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing correspondence, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11th September were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 17th September, omitting matters in respect of which the

Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor R-M Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 12th September, be approved and adopted.

**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.
Shareholders' Committee**

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Maghie, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 11th September, be approved and adopted.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson