

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall,
on Thursday, 9th January, 2025 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Murray (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McCormick);
and Aldermen 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, S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson,
Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,
Kelly, Long, Lyons, Maghie, Maskey,
McAteer, McCabe, McCallin, McCann, McCusker,
McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKay, McKeown,
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Nelson,
O'Neill, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland and Councillor Magee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Groogan, R-M Donnelly, Duffy and Verner declared an interest in the item "PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that they worked for organisations which had applied for funding. As the item did not become the subject of debate they were not required to leave the meeting.

Councillors McKeown and Smyth declared an interest in the item "Pitch Partnership Agreements" within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that they had children who played for Rosario Football Club. As the item did not become the subject of debate they were not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor Lyons declared an interest in the item "Notice of Motion – Addressing Educational Inequalities in Belfast" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that he worked for an Education Union. As the item did not become the subject of debate he was not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor Doherty declared an interest in the item “Notice of Motions –Closures” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that he worked closely with the West Wellbeing charity, and he accordingly left the Chamber during the item when it arose in discussion.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murray),
Seconded by The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McCormick) and

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

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor welcomed Councillor McCallin to her first Council meeting and wished her well in her new role. He also paid tribute to former Councillor Nic Bhranair, who had recently stepped down from the Council.

He advised the Council of the recent retirement of Mr. Noel Munnis, Partnership Manager, and wished him well in his retirement.

He welcomed Dr. Adrian Johnston to the Council, who had recently taken up the post of Innovation Commissioner.

The Lord Mayor, along with several representatives of different political parties, paid tribute to the outgoing High Sheriff, Councillor Sammy Douglas and thanked him for his work throughout the year. Councillor Bunting advised the Council that he had recently received an award for his contribution to cross-community work in the City and that it was well deserved.

A number of Members congratulated the incoming High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer, who would be taking up the post in the coming weeks.

Councillor Sammy Douglas thanked the Council for the kind words and stated that he had thoroughly enjoyed his time as High Sheriff.

Alderman McCullough expressed his thanks to Mr. Davy McClean, who was stepping down as the leader of the Basement Youth Club in North Belfast, after dedicating the past 35 years to his community.

The Lord Mayor welcomed the progress which had been made with the design for a new stained glass, LGBT themed window which would soon be installed within the City Hall.

Condolences

The Lord Mayor, together with representatives of several political parties, extended sympathy to Councillor Beattie on the passing of his father, Jack, before Christmas.

The Deputy Lord Mayor and a number of political representatives expressed condolences to the friends and family of the footballer, Mr. Michael Newberry, who had passed away in December. At the Deputy Lord Mayor's request, the Lord Mayor agreed to send letters of condolence to his family and to Linfield and Cliftonville Football Clubs, of which he had been a former player.

Councillor McKeown, on behalf of the Council, expressed condolences to the friends and family of Mr. Jody Gormley, a Gaelic footballer who had recently passed away.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 13th December 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

A Member suggested that, in future, consultation responses such as the "Consultation Low Carbon Residential Heating Consultation Response" and the "DAERA Consultation on the establishment of a Just Transition Commission for Northern Ireland" could be brought before the Climate and City Resilience Committee instead of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, given the latter's often considerable sized agenda.

Amendment

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

That the minute of the meeting under the heading 'Notice of Motion – Armed Forces Covenant' be rejected and, accordingly, that the Council adopts the following motion, noting that it would be subject to an Equality Screening:

"That this Council recognises the unique skills that are held by Armed Forces service leavers; recognises that many veterans can face disadvantages compared to the general population, arising from military life, when accessing services and as such, this Council commits to signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant immediately."

On a vote, twenty-seven Members voted for the amendment, twenty-seven Members against and, with three no votes, it was declared a tied vote. Accordingly, with the Lord Mayor having a final and casting vote, it was declared carried.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan,

That the minute of the meeting under the heading 'Notices of Motion – Quarterly Update: Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance' be amended to keep the "Save West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness" motion open.

On a vote, forty Members voted for the amendment and sixteen Members voted against it and it was declared carried.

Adoption of Minutes

The Lord Mayor put the minutes, as amended, to the Council for approval and adoption.

As there was no consensus, the minutes, as amended, was subject to a vote.

On a vote, thirty Members voted for the approval and adoption of the minutes, as amended, and twenty-eight Members voted against and accordingly it was declared carried.

In response to a number of Members' queries, the City Solicitor provided the Council with confirmation of voting procedures during Hybrid meetings.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Canavan,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 3rd December, 2024, be approved and adopted.

Single Parent Family Membership Category

A Member requested that the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services would write to GLL to ascertain whether its Belfast centres would be the first within its network to offer Single Parent Families a discounted membership and to highlight that they were also, perhaps, the first leisure centres on the island of Ireland to do so.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing addition, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 3rd December were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Nelson,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 4th December, 2024, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Alderman Rodgers,
Seconded by Councillor Doran and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 11th December, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 10th December, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

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

Moved by Councillor Ferguson
Seconded by Councillor Ó Néill,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 19th December, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Restricted Item

Resolved – That the Council agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

Adoption of Minutes

After discussion, the minutes of the proceedings of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 19th December, 2024, were thereupon approved and adopted.

Climate and City Resilience

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 5th December, 2024, be approved and adopted.

Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 7th January be approved and adopted.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson