

Council

MONTHLY MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall on Wednesday, 1st April, 2015
at the hour of 6.00 o'clock p.m., pursuant to Notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
(Councillor Carson) (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Spence);
the High Sheriff (Councillor McKee);
Aldermen Browne, Convery, Kingston, McCoubrey,
McGimpsey, L. Patterson, R. Patterson, Robinson,
Rodgers and Stalford;
Councillors Armitage, Attwood, Austin, Beattie,
Boyle, Bradshaw, Brown, Campbell, Carroll, Clarke,
Copeland, Corr, Corr Johnston, Craig, Dudgeon,
Garrett, Graham, B. Groves, E. Groves, Haire,
Hanna, Hargey, Heading, Howard, Hussey,
Hutchinson, Johnston, Jones, Kyle, Long, Magee,
Magennis, Mallon, McAllister, McAteer, McCabe,
McConville, McDonough-Brown, McNamee,
McVeigh, Mullan, Newton, Ó Donnghaile, O'Hara,
and Sandford.

Filming of Proceedings

The Chief Executive reported that a number of broadcasting companies had sought approval to film the commencement of the meeting. She asked that the Council indicate whether it wished to accede to the requests.

The Council granted the approval sought.

Installation of Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor

Prior to the commencement of business, the Chief Executive reminded the Council that, at the annual meeting of the Shadow Council on 24th March, Councillors Carson and Spence had, in accordance with the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, been nominated to serve as the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord Mayor, respectively, for the year to end on the date of the annual meeting of the Council in June, 2016.

Accordingly, Councillor Carson and Alderman Spence, having been conducted to the dais by their proposers, Councillor McVeigh and Alderman Kingston, respectively, were installed in Office and subscribed to the Declaration of Office.

Councillor Carson thanked the Members for electing him to serve as Lord Mayor, outlined his main priorities for the coming fourteen months and paid tribute to the previous Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor for the manner in which they had carried out their duties.

Alderman Spence paid tribute also to the previous Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor, thanked the Members for his election and stated that he was looking forward to his term in Office.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apology

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Bunting.

Congratulations

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Councillor Bunting on the birth of her son.

Councillor Campbell

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, commended Councillor Campbell for coming to the assistance of two foreign nationals who were being verbally abused by a member of the public whilst travelling on public transport.

Minutes

Moved by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Carson),
Seconded by Councillor Hargey and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the District Council of 3rd March and the annual meeting of the District Council of 24th March be taken as read and signed as correct.

Request to Address the Council

The Chief Executive informed the Members that a request to address the Council had been received on behalf of the Danske Bank in relation to the Shadow Planning Committee's decision of 11th March indicating that it was minded to support the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's proposal to list the bank's corporate headquarters in Donegall Square West.

The Council agreed to receive the deputation and Dr. T. Quinn, Planning Consultant, Braniff Associates and Mr. A. Tough, Regional Portfolio Manager, Danske Bank were admitted to the meeting.

Dr. Quinn informed the Council that the listing of the building would be inappropriate on the following grounds:

- there were already sufficient safeguards in place in that it was located within a Conservation Area, which prevented it from being demolished, and within the setting of an adjacent listed building, namely, the Scottish Provident Building, which meant that only sympathetic modifications could be made to its exterior;
- the Northern Ireland Environment Agency report which set out the rationale for listing the premises had failed to notice that it had been altered significantly in recent years through the addition of a sixth floor and the infilling of the central lightwell, which had undermined its architectural merits for listing;
- the building had been constructed in the 1970s and had operated solely as a bank which meant that it was not old enough to have historical merit; and
- the Danske Bank, as one of the largest employers in the City Centre, would be opposed to having unnecessary constraints imposed upon its business operations.

Dr. Quinn concluded by requesting that the Council urge the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to reappraise its proposal to list the building and he and Mr. Tough retired from the meeting.

It was noted that consideration would be given to the representation which had been made when the minutes of the Shadow Planning Committee were discussed later in the meeting.

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Alderman Stalford,
Seconded by Alderman Browne,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th March be approved and adopted, subject to the variation of the minute under the heading "Community Development Funding" to reflect that the amount allocated to the Holy Trinity Centre under 'Building Revenue Funding' should read £18,000 and not £4,200 as had been reported to the Committee.

Festivals and Event Funding

At the request of Councillor Garrett, the Council agreed that a report be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee seeking approval for the Lord Mayor to attend the New York – New Belfast event.

Amendment

Requests for Financial Assistance

Moved by Councillor McNamee,
Seconded by Alderman Browne,

That the decision under the heading “Requests for Financial Assistance” be amended to provide that consideration of the two applications be deferred until such time as the information had been provided by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

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

<u>For 23</u>	<u>Against 35</u>
Aldermen Browne, Convery, McGimpsey and Rodgers; Councillors Armitage, Attwood, Boyle, Bradshaw, Brown, Copeland, Craig, Dudgeon, Hanna, Heading, Howard, Johnston, Jones, Long, Mallon, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McNamee and Mullan.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Carson); the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Spence); the High Sheriff (Alderman McKee); Aldermen Kingston, McCoubrey, L. Patterson, R. Patterson, Robinson and Stalford; Councillors Austin, Beattie, Campbell, Carroll, Clarke, Corr, Corr Johnston, Garrett, Graham, B. Groves, E. Groves, Haire, Hargey, Hussey, Hutchinson, Kyle, Magee, Magennis, McAteer, McCabe, McConville, McVeigh, Newton, Ó Donnghaile, O’Hara and Sandford.

Amendment

**Area Working Belfast Investment Fund/
Local Investment Fund Update**

Moved by Alderman Robinson,
Seconded by Councillor Ó Donnghaile and

Resolved – That the decision under the heading “Area Working Belfast Investment Fund/Local Investment Fund Update” be amended to provide that two projects in the East of the City, namely Willowfield Parish Church and the re-development of the Blanchflower Playing Fields by Harland and Wolff Welders Football Club, be moved into the pre-agreed BIF staged processes, as agreed by the East Belfast Area-Based Working Group at its meeting on 26th March, 2015.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing addition, amendment and variation, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th March were approved and adopted.

Transition Committee

Moved by Councillor Jones,
Seconded by Councillor Corr Johnston,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Transition Committee of 9th March be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Hussey,
Seconded by Councillor Craig,

That the decision under the heading "Reconsidered Matter: Service Convergence – Pricing for Outdoor Leisure" be amended to provide that the decision on the rate for the hire of 3G pitches at the Brooke Activity Centre be referred to the People and Communities Committee for consideration, on the grounds that the decision, as it stands, discriminates against youth teams using the pitches, would charge them more than youth teams using other Council centres and would disproportionately adversely affect Roman Catholic children without proper equality assessment.

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

<u>For 23</u>	<u>Against 34</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Spence); the High Sheriff (Alderman McKee); Aldermen Browne, Kingston, McCoubrey, McGimpsey, L. Patterson, R. Patterson, Robinson, Rodgers and Stalford; Councillors Brown, Copeland, Corr Johnston, Craig, Graham, Haire, Hussey, Hutchinson, Johnston, Kyle, Newton and Sandford.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Carson); Alderman Convery; Councillors Armitage, Attwood, Austin, Beattie, Boyle, Bradshaw, Campbell, Carroll, Clarke, Corr, Garrett, B. Groves, E. Groves, Hanna, Hargey, Heading, Howard, Jones, Long, Magee, Magennis, Mallon, McAllister, McAteer, McCabe, McConville, McDonough-Brown, McNamee, McVeigh, Mullan, Ó Donnghaile and O'Hara.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the Transition Committee of 9th March were approved and adopted.

Shadow Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Mullan,
Seconded by Councillor Armitage,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Shadow Planning Committee of 11th March be approved and adopted.

Request for Matter to be Referred to Committee

At the request of Councillor Mullan, the Council agreed that the minute under the heading "Listing and De-Listing of Buildings" be referred to the Planning Committee for further consideration.

The Council agreed also that representatives of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Danske Bank be invited to attend a future meeting of the Planning Committee in order to discuss issues around the proposed listing of the Bank's corporate headquarters in Donegall Square West.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing omission, the minutes of the proceedings of the Shadow Planning Committee of 11th March were approved and adopted.

Notices of Motion

Belfast City Council Boundary

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Craig proposed:

"This Council considers that its present boundaries are artificial, do not adequately reflect the socio-economic geography of the City, and are a serious impediment to the economic development of not only Belfast but the entire Province. Accordingly, this Council will seek to engage the necessary advisors to assist it in building the most robust case possible for the extension of its boundaries. Any revised boundaries will reflect fully the City's physical and human geography and permit the Council to maximise its role as the engine of development throughout Ulster.

In addition, the Council will embark on a campaign to ensure that the proposed new boundaries are brought into reality by the Northern Ireland Assembly through the necessary amendments to the Local Government (Boundaries) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012. Therefore, the Council requests the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider how best this matter could be taken forward."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Dudgeon.

The Lord Mayor confirmed that, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the Motion would be referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Tax Justice

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Hanna proposed:

“This Council notes:

- the growing awareness of aggressive tax avoidance and tax evasion and its associated impact, as well as the importance of curtailing tax avoidance and evasion to create a sound market economy in which all traders can compete on a level playing field to provide goods and services;
- the wider impact of tax avoidance and evasion on the local and international economy, and in particular its cost to some of the world’s poorest countries. As a result of tax avoidance and evasion by some multinational corporations, developing nations are estimated to lose sums greater than the amount they receive in development aid each year; and
- the steps the UK Government has taken to tackle tax abuse by companies seeking to secure public contracts by issuing ‘Procurement Policy Note 03/14: promoting tax compliance’.

Accordingly, this Council agrees to amend its procurement policies to ensure that all bidders for Council contracts above current European Union thresholds self-certify that they are fully tax compliant, in line with central government practice, and that the Council actively publicises this policy.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Armitage.

The Lord Mayor confirmed that, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the Motion would be referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Opposition to Water Charges

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Alderman Stalford proposed:

“This Council recognises that many Belfast citizens are struggling due to rising utility bills and the increasing cost of living to pay for basic necessities. It believes that the decision of the Northern Ireland Executive to prevent the introduction of additional water charging was a much-needed step that has alleviated some of the burden upon the most vulnerable members of our society.

Accordingly, this Council re-affirms its opposition to the introduction of any additional water charging which would have a devastating impact upon senior citizens, the working poor, students and other vulnerable groups.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Mallon.

After discussion, the Motion was put to the meeting and passed unanimously.

Irish Rugby Teams

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Ó Donnghaile proposed:

“This Council congratulates both the Ireland senior men's and women's international rugby squads on their recent victories in the Six Nations tournaments. It recognises again the positive impact which sport has on the health and well-being of our City and its people and agrees to invite both teams to a civic reception which will allow the people of Belfast the opportunity to show their support and appreciation for the teams.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Kyle.

The Lord Mayor confirmed that, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the Motion would be referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Public Service Spending Cuts

Moved by Councillor Brown,

“This Council recognises that cuts in spending on public services has a disproportionately negative impact on the poorest and most vulnerable in our society in general and in the most deprived areas of Belfast in particular. This Council considers that the cap on rates payable on properties valued over £400,000 to be a regressive, unaffordable and unjustified perk for the very wealthiest in our society, and calls on the Northern Ireland Executive to abolish the cap on rates and to reinstate the Rates Deferral Scheme to afford appropriate protection to rate payers who are asset rich but income poor.”

At the request of Councillor Jones and with the permission of the proposer, Councillor Brown, the Council agreed to defer the Motion to its next meeting to enable Members to give it full consideration.

Lord Mayor
Chairman