

Council

SPECIAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall on Monday, 2nd September, 2019
at 5.30 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Finucane) (Chairperson); the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); the High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford); Aldermen Copeland, Haire, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Spence; and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Dorrian, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Graham, Groogan, Groves, Hargey, Heading, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, McAllister, McAteer, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Nicholl, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Black, Hanvey, Howard, Mulholland and Newton.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Notice of Motion

Suspension of Parliament

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor de Faoite proposed:

“This Council

- condemns the undemocratic actions of the Prime Minister, whose suspension of Parliament is an attempt to frustrate the efforts of a majority of MPs opposed to a no deal Brexit and to limit further scrutiny of the British Government’s preparatory planning for no deal Brexit which has already outlined the likelihood of checks along the border;

- expresses grave concern at the failure of the Government to recognise the damage which will be done by a no deal Brexit to the Good Friday Agreement, devolution, North/South relations and East/West relations;
- notes that Belfast City voted to remain in the European Union, and has since elected a majority of Belfast City Councillors who are opposed to a no deal Brexit; and
- resolves to take legal action against the Government to prevent the suspension of Parliament, to prevent a no deal Brexit and to ensure full democratic accountability at a vital moment for the future of these islands.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Whyte.

Councillor de Faoite sought and was granted approval by the Council to amend the final bullet point of his motion to read as follows:

“resolves to join and/or take legal action against the Government to prevent the suspension of Parliament, to prevent a no deal Brexit and to ensure full democratic accountability at a vital moment for the future of these islands.”

At the request of Councillor Ferguson, the proposer agreed to the inclusion of the following bullet point at the end of his motion: “notes that civic bodies, including the Irish Congress of Trades Unions and NUS-USI, have launched a “no to no deal” Brexit campaign and agrees to add Belfast City Council to the list of signatories supporting the initiative.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Nicholl,

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor de Faoite and seconded by Councillor Whyte, as amended, be amended to provide for the deletion of everything after the words “This Council” in the first sentence and the insertion of the following:

“is concerned but not surprised by the actions of the British Prime Minister in his attempt to prorogue the British parliament to drive through his own “No Deal Agenda” and notes the concerns from the CBI, Chamber of Commerce and from local business and citizens at the potentially devastating impact of a no-deal Brexit on the economy of Belfast.

This Council strongly objects to the people of Northern Ireland and the rights of citizens being used as pawns in a British negotiation strategy.

While this Council is sympathetic to legal action currently being taken to stop the British Prime Minister, it believes, while this British Government is still in place, it will continue to circumvent its own institutions for its reckless agenda.

Therefore, the Council will write to the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, and the European Union's Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier, to reaffirm our support for the Backstop and the retention of the Single Market and Customs Union, as well as pressing them to hold firm and not to re-negotiate the Draft Withdrawal Agreement of November, 2018."

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

For 24	Against 30
The Lord Mayor (Councillor (Finucane); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Canavan, Carson, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Groves, Hargey, M. Kelly, Long, Magee, Magennis, McAllister, McAteer, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Nicholl and Walsh.	The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford); Aldermen Copeland, Haire, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Spence; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Dorrian, Ferguson, Flynn, Graham, Groogan, Heading, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons, McKeown, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Verner and Whyte.

The original motion, standing in the name of Councillor de Faoite and seconded by Councillor Whyte, as amended and set out hereunder, was thereupon put to the meeting:

"This Council

- condemns the undemocratic actions of the Prime Minister, whose suspension of Parliament is an attempt to frustrate the efforts of a majority of MPs opposed to a no deal Brexit and to limit further scrutiny of the British Government's preparatory planning for no deal Brexit which has already outlined the likelihood of checks along the border;
- expresses grave concern at the failure of the Government to recognise the damage which will be done by a no deal Brexit to the Good Friday Agreement, devolution, North/South relations and East/West relations;
- notes that Belfast City voted to remain in the European Union, and has since elected a majority of Belfast City Councillors who are opposed to a no deal Brexit; and

**Special Meeting of Council
Monday, 2nd September, 2019**

- resolves to join and/or take legal action against the Government to prevent the suspension of Parliament, to prevent a no deal Brexit and to ensure full democratic accountability at a vital moment for the future of these islands; and
- notes that civic bodies, including the Irish Congress of Trades Unions and NUS-USI, have launched a “no to no deal” Brexit campaign and agrees to add Belfast City Council to the list of signatories supporting the initiative.”

On a recorded vote twelve Members voted for the motion and eighteen against, with twenty-four “no votes” and it was declared lost.

For 12	Against 18	No vote 24
Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Heading, Lyons, McKeown, O’Hara, Smyth and Whyte.	The High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford); Aldermen Copeland, Haire, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Spence; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Dorrian, Graham, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Pankhurst and Verner.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor (Finucane); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); and Councillors D. Baker, S. Baker, Beattie, Canavan, Carson, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Groves, Hargey, M. Kelly, Long, Magee, Magennis, McAllister, McAteer, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Nicholl and Walsh.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson