

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held Remotely via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 1st December, 2020
at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
(Alderman McCoubrey) (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McCusker);
The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner);
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston,
Rodgers and Sandford; and
Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks,
Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins,
Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson,
Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Harvey, Heading,
Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle,
Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAllister,
McAteer, McCabe, McCullough,
McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin,
McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy,
Newton, Nicholl, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt,
Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Kingston declared an interest in relation to the item 6.a) Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading Covid-19 Christmas Response Funding, in that he was employed by the Greater Shankill Partnership;

Councillor Verner declared an interest in relation to the item 6.a) Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading Covid-19 Christmas Response Funding, in that she was employed by the Greater Shankill Partnership;

Alderman Copeland declared an interest in relation to the item 7.g) Funding for Palliative and End-of-Life Care, in that she was employed as a counsellor for a Hospice in Belfast;

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in respect of the following motions: item 7.b) Pay for Student Nurses, 7.c) Re-Opening Doctors Surgeries, 7.d) Zero-Covid Strategy, 7.g) Funding for Palliative and End-of-Life Care, in that he was employed by the Health Service;

Councillor Maskey declared an interest in relation to the item 6.a) Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading Covid-19 Christmas Response Funding, in that he was employed by Intercomm;

Councillor Gormley declared an interest in relation to the item 6.a) Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading Covid-19 Christmas Response Funding, in that he was a board member of LORAG;

Councillor Cobain declared an interest in relation to the item 6.a) Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading Covid-19 Christmas Response Funding, in that he was a member of Intercomm;

Councillor McCabe declared an interest in relation to the item 6.a) Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading Covid-19 Christmas Response Funding, in that her husband was employed by Upper Andersonstown Community Forum;

Councillor Hutchinson declared an interest in relation to the item 6.a) Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading Covid-19 Christmas Response Funding, in that he was employed by an organisation who was the lead partner for LCAP; and

Councillor Canavan declared an interest in relation to the item 6.a) Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading Covid-19 Christmas Response Funding, in that she was a board member of the Greater Shankill Partnership.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey),
Seconded by Councillor Black and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meetings of the Council of 2nd and 19th November be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, extended congratulations to Councillor Maskey on his recent engagement; and

Councillor O'Hara thanked Councillor Nicholl for her work towards City Hall being illuminated red on World Aids Day and called on Elected Members to recommit to addressing stigma, to ensure that there was adequate access to healthcare and preventative services, relationship and sex education that was fit for purpose, and to ensure that those communities most disproportionately affected by HIV, were centred in that work.

Minutes

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Black,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th and 26th November, 2020, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

The information contained in the report associated with the following amendment is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act(Northern Ireland) 2014.

Amendment 1

Council Assets Rental Holiday and St. George's Market – Financial Implications

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown,

"That the decision of the Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 26th November, under the heading "Council Assets Rental Holiday and St. George's Market – Financial Implications", be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees to waive the rental fees for stallholders in St. George's market and to defer the request relating to the units to allow for further information to be provided."

The Council proceeded to vote on the matter, with twenty Members for and thirty-six against and it was declared lost.

Amendment 2

Commercial and Procurement Service - Pricing Policy

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan,

"That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th November, under the heading "Commercial and Procurement Service - Pricing Policy", be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees that the matter would be reconsidered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee."

On a recorded vote, forty-two Members voted for the amendment and seventeen against, and it was declared carried.

<u>For 42</u>	<u>Against 17</u>
<p>Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McCabe, McAllister, McAteer, McDonough-Brown,, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, Nicholl, O’Hara, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.</p>	<p>The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Hussey, T. Kelly, McCullough, Newton, Pankhurst and Spratt.</p>

Amendment 3

Casement Park – Notice of Opinion

Moved by Councillor Matt Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

“That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th November, under the heading “Casement Park – Notice of Opinion”, be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees that the matter would be reconsidered, with delegated authority, at a special meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.”

On a recorded vote, seven Members voted for the amendment and fifty-one against and it was declared lost.

<u>For 7</u>	<u>Against 51</u>
<p>Councillors, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, O’Hara and Smyth.</p>	<p>The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Hanvey, Heading, Howard Hussey, Hutchinson T. Kelly, M. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, , McAllister, McAteer, McCabe, McDonough-Brown, McCullough, McKeown, McLaughlin McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland,</p>

	Murphy, Newton, Nicholl, Pankhurst, Spratt, Walsh and Whyte
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Amendment 4

Covid-19 Christmas Response Funding

At the request of Councillor Walsh, the Council agreed to amend the minute of the meeting of 26th November, under the above mentioned heading, to provide that authority was delegated to the special meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, to decide on how the remaining Department for Communities funding would be allocated.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th and 26th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Baker,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 10th November, 2020 be approved and adopted.

Amendment 1

Proposed improvements to Parks and Open Spaces

At the request of Councillor Kyle, the Council agreed to amend the minute of the meeting of 10th November, under the above mentioned heading, to provide that the Council write to the Department for Infrastructure to request that it prioritises design, funding and completion of its public consultation regarding the installation of lighting on the Comber Greenway, and engage in discussion with the Council regarding future ownership and management of the Greenway.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 10th November, were approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Brooks,
Seconded by Alderman Kingston and

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11th and 24th November, 2020 be approved and adopted.

Amendment 1

NI High Street Taskforce and Future City Centre Programme

At the request of Councillor Heading, the Council agreed to amend the minute of the meeting of 11th November, under the above mentioned heading, to provide that, the All-Party Forum, convened following its special meeting held on 2nd August, 2019, to secure the continued operation of the Harland and Wolff Shipyard, be reconvened to engage with local stakeholders, retail units and Trade Unions in order to inform the NI High Street Task Force that had been proposed by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Amendment 2

Department for Infrastructure Roads - Autumn Report

At the request of Councillor Hanvey, the Council agreed to amend the minute of the meeting of 24th November, under the above mentioned heading, to provide that the Council write to the Department for Infrastructure to ask for clarity on its position on increasing sustainable transport in Belfast.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11th and 24th November, were approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor McAteer and

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 18th November, 2020, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Hussey,
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 4th and 17th November, 2020, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Brexit Committee

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh and

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 11th November, 2020 be approved and adopted.

Motions

Invitation to President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor McKeown proposed:

“This Council welcomes the election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as President and Vice President of the USA respectively, both as a signal of hope for that country and a repudiation of hatred and division.

The Council agrees to invite President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris to Belfast at the earliest opportunity when circumstances safely permit it.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor de Faoite.

On a recorded vote, thirty-five Members voted for the amendment and twenty-two against and it was declared carried.

<u>For 35</u>	<u>Against 22</u>
Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, M. Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, O’Hara, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte	The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Ferguson, Hussey, Hutchinson T. Kelly, Kyle, McCullough, Newton, Pankhurst and Spratt

Pay for Student Nurses

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Groogan proposed:

“This Council recognises the efforts of student nurses throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, stepping up to help our NHS cope with the extra pressures put on it by the pandemic and providing invaluable support to qualified nurses in our hospitals.

This Council also notes that student nurses were paid during the first wave of the pandemic, as they should have been, in recognition of their commitment and work caring for people.

This Council believes that student nurses should be paid a fair and proper wage for their work and agrees to write to the Minister of Health stating our support for reinstating the pay to student nurses as a matter of urgency.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor O’Hara.

After discussion, the motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Re-Opening Doctors Surgeries

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Bunting proposed:

“This Council notes that, due to Covid-19, a number of GP surgeries remain closed for face-to-face appointments and providing telephone or online appointments. In some cases, GP practices have closed and are currently operating services through another practice within the medical group.

This Council notes with concern that a number of community GP practices based within community developments remain closed, thus restricting the most vulnerable in our communities from having easy access to their regular medical services. Where treatment is needed, many elderly and vulnerable patients are using public transport to access the alternative surgery.

The Council agrees to write to the Health Minister and request that he urgently reviews the restrictions imposed on GP services, particularly within community settings, and to detail the necessary steps needed for GP surgeries to fully re-open.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Spratt.

After discussion, the motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Zero Covid Strategy

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Michael Collins proposed:

“This Council resolves to write to the First and Deputy First Minister urging them to pursue a Zero-Covid Strategy in order to avoid an endless cycle of lockdowns, to protect public health, safeguard jobs, and ensure a fairer economic recovery.

The Executive’s indecisiveness and failure to implement such a strategy, when community transmission was almost at zero, was a missed opportunity that prolonged and deepened this crisis.

By contrast, the Zero-Covid Strategy approach to the Covid-19 pandemic as adopted by New Zealand, Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea, and China has minimised loss of life and livelihoods; with Asia-Pacific economies recovering faster and with lower death rates.

As opposed to the Executive's failed ‘Living with Covid’ approach, a Zero-Covid Strategy pursues an aggressive suppression of the virus with the goal of achieving zero community transmission – an achievable target for Ireland, an island country.

This necessitates the introduction of a fully funded and publicly owned track, trace and testing system, a significant limit on international travel, and major investment into our public health infrastructure: all of which could be funded through the introduction of a cross-border Zero-Covid Emergency Fund.

In order to avoid an endless cycle of lockdowns, protect public health and safeguard jobs: this Council pledges its support for a Zero-Covid Strategy.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Matt Collins.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor Michael Collins and seconded by Councillor Matt Collins be amended as follows:

“This Council resolves to write to **Minister of Health urging him to bring forward a new robust strategy to the Executive, based on international best practice of Find, Test, Trace, Isolate and Support, in order to avoid an endless cycle of lockdowns, to protect public health, safeguard jobs, and ensure a fairer economic recovery.**

Note with concern the miss-use of the cross community voting mechanism by DUP Ministers to block the Chief Medical Officer's public health advice which led to confusion among the public and undermined the public health message.

Recognise the approach to the Covid-19 pandemic as adopted by New Zealand, Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea, and China has minimised loss of life and livelihoods; with Asia-Pacific economies recovering faster and with lower death rates.

Acknowledge the need for a robust and fully resourced FTTIS system as part of an aggressive approach to suppress the virus, with the goal of achieving zero community transmission on the island of Ireland.

Supports the introduction of a fully funded and publicly owned track, trace and testing system, a vigilant system to monitor all travel onto the island, and major investment into our public health infrastructure: all of which could be funded through the introduction of a cross-border Covid-19 Emergency Fund that is informed by a coordinated approach to avoid an endless cycle of lockdowns, protect public health and safeguard jobs."

Councillor Matt Collins requested that the proposer agree to insert the term Zero Covid Strategy into the first line of the proposed amendment.

Councillor Garrett declined the request.

After discussion, the proposed amended motion as set out hereunder, was put to the meeting:

"This Council resolves to write to Minister of Health urging him to bring forward a new robust strategy to the Executive, based on international best practice of Find, Test, Trace, Isolate and Support, in order to avoid an endless cycle of lockdowns, to protect public health, safeguard jobs, and ensure a fairer economic recovery.

Note with concern the miss-use of the cross community voting mechanism by DUP Ministers to block the Chief Medical Officer's public health advice which led to confusion among the public and undermined the public health message.

Recognise the approach to the Covid-19 pandemic as adopted by New Zealand, Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea, and China has minimised loss of life and livelihoods; with Asia-Pacific economies recovering faster and with lower death rates.

Acknowledge the need for a robust and fully resourced FTTIS system as part of an aggressive approach to suppress the virus, with the goal of achieving zero community transmission on the island of Ireland.

Supports the introduction of a fully funded and publicly owned track, trace and testing system, a vigilant system to monitor all travel onto the island, and major investment into our public health infrastructure: all of which could be funded through the introduction of a cross-border Covid-19 Emergency Fund that is informed by a coordinated approach to avoid an endless cycle of lockdowns, protect public health and safeguard jobs.”

The Council proceeded to vote on the amended motion, with eighteen Members for and thirty-eight against and it was declared lost.

The Council further proceeded to vote on the substantive motion, with seven Members for and forty-nine against and it was declared lost.

Standing Order 13(f)

During debate on the previous motion, the Council’s attention was drawn to the fact that the time was approaching midnight.

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Alderman McCoubrey proposed:

“That the meeting of the Council proceeded to consider the remainder of the Motions, as set out in the agenda.”

The Council proceeded to vote on the matter, with seven Members for and forty-nine against and it was declared lost.

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor declared that the meeting of the Council would be adjourned until 7th December, 2020 at 6.00 p.m.

Chairperson