

# Council

## MONTHLY MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall on Monday, 2nd March, 2020  
at 6.00 o'clock p.m., pursuant to notice.

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

### Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

### Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor McAllister.

### Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mulholland declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, under the heading "A City Imagining Investment Programme – Cultural Multi-Annual Grants", on the basis that she was employed by the Oh Yeah Music Centre and a family member was a director of Prime Cut Productions, both of which had secured funding, and left the Chamber whilst the matter was being discussed.

The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner) declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, under the heading "A City Imagining Investment Programme – Cultural Multi-Annual Grants", in that she was employed by the Greater Shankill Partnership, which had applied for funding, and left the Chamber whilst the matter was under consideration.

Alderman Haire declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "George Telford Memorial Grand Lodge Centenary Dinner", on the basis that he had attended the event, and left the Chamber when the matter was raised.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

Councillor Graham declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading “George Telford Memorial Grand Lodge Centenary Dinner”, in that that he was a past Grand Master of that Lodge, and left the Chamber when the matter was raised.

Councillor Long pointed out that his wife was the Assembly’s Justice Minister and that, should any matters of a pecuniary nature be raised which fell within the remit of the Department of Justice, he would leave the Chamber. However, as no matters were raised, he was not required to do so.

Councillor Whyte declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee under the heading “Belfast Healthy Cities, in that his mother was employed by that organisation. However, as it did not become the subject of discussion, he was not required to leave the Chamber.

Councillor Canavan declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, under the heading “A City Imagining Investment Programme – Cultural Multi-Annual Grants”, on the basis that she was a member of the Greater Shankill Partnership Board, and left the Chamber whilst the matter was being discussed.

Councillor McMullan declared an interest in relation to the motion on Compass Counselling, in that his wife worked for a rival organisation, and left the Chamber whilst it was under consideration.

**Minutes of the Council**

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor D. Baker),  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 3rd February be taken as read and signed as correct.

**Official Announcements**

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, congratulated local MMA fighter Leah McCourt on being the first woman to headline a Bellator Europe event in Dublin and on defeating her opponent.

Councillor Mulholland thanked Ms. Catherine Toolan, who would shortly be leaving her post as Chief Executive of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall to take up an appointment as Managing Director of the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, and wished her well for the future.

Councillor Donnelly paid tribute to former Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor, Mrs. Lily Fitzsimons, who had died recently and extended his condolences to her family.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

Councillor Graham thanked the Lord Mayor for visiting the Suffolk Community Garden earlier in the day to view a number of projects being delivered there.

**Requests to Address the Council**

**2020 EUBC Schoolboys and Schoolgirls  
European Boxing Championships**

The Chief Executive informed the Council that a request had been received from Mr. L. Corr, Belfast Boxing Development Officer, to address the Council in relation to the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st February, under the heading “Financial Reporting – Quarter 3 2019/20”, not to provide additional support of £100k towards the hosting of the 2020 EUBC Schoolboys and Schoolgirls European Boxing Championships.

The Council approved the request and Mr. Corr, together with Mr. C. Toland, Ulster Boxing Council Secretary, and Mr. S. O’Hare, Ulster Boxing Operations Manager, were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Corr referred to the success of the recent bid to host the 2020 EUBC Schoolboys and Schoolgirls European Boxing Championships in Belfast and pointed out that it would be the first major amateur boxing event to be held in the City since 2001. The Championships, which would run from 7th June till 11th July, would be held in Queen’s University’s Physical Education Centre and would attract around 750 competitors. It was estimated that 10,000 people would visit the City over the course of the Championships and that 13,500 bed nights and between £1.5 million and £2 million would be generated. The event would also be streamed across a number of media platforms.

In terms of other funding sources, he pointed out that Sport Ireland, the Department for Communities and Tourism NI, had been approached but had yet to respond. Mr. Corr concluded by highlighting the short timeframe which existed to allow for preparations to begin in earnest and by stressing the need for the Council to provide the additional support for the event.

Mr. Toland pointed out that the Council’s Boxing Strategy had played a central role in promoting boxing across the City and referred to the marked increase in the number of boxing clubs since its implementation. He stressed that the hosting of the 2020 EUBC Schoolboys and Schoolgirls European Boxing Championships would build upon that work and that additional support from the Council was essential to ensure their success.

The Lord Mayor thanked the boxing representatives for their presentation.

The Council noted the information which had been provided and that it would have an opportunity to discuss the issue later in the meeting.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

**Relationship and Sexual Education**

The Council was informed that a request had been received from Mr J. J. McGrady, Chair of the Belfast Youth Forum, to allow a group of young people from the Youth Forum to address the Council in advance of Councillor Mulholland's motion on Relationship and Sexual Education.

The Council approved the request and Mr. C. Fay, Mr. B. Matchett, and Ms. S. McCullough were welcomed to the meeting.

Ms. McCullough provided a brief overview of the work of the Youth Forum and drew the Members' attention to its recent research project, entitled "Any Use?", which had examined the issue of Relationship and Sexual Education in schools. The project, which had involved Queen's University and Common Youth, had been undertaken in response to concerns which had been expressed by many young people around the poor quality and content of the relationship and sexual education being provided by schools and had produced strong evidence to support those concerns.

Mr. Fay reported that almost 800 young people across Belfast had taken part in the Youth Forum's research project. Respondents had used terms such as basic, unhelpful, inconsistent, biased and almost non-existent to describe the Relationship and Sexual Education which they had received. He pointed out that young people were not asking for a school's ethos or the views of parents to be ignored but for the opinions of young people on their relationship and sexual education to be given equal consideration.

Mr. Matchett pointed out that the motion being presented later in the meeting called upon the Council to support the three recommendations resulting from the "Any Use?" report and stressed that, if passed, it would send a positive message to those involved in curriculum and educational policy making, in the context of addressing young people's relationship and sexual education.

The Youth Forum representatives were thanked by the Lord Mayor.

The Council noted the information which had been provided and that it would have an opportunity to discuss the issue later in the meeting.

**Compass Counselling**

The Chief Executive informed the Council that a request had been received from Ms. M. McDermott, a Director of Compass Counselling, to address the Council in advance of the motion on Compass Counselling being proposed by Councillor Matt Collins.

The Council acceded to the request and Ms. McDermott, together with Ms. S. Irwin and Ms. P. Whelan, were welcomed to the meeting.

Ms. McDermott informed the Council that Compass Counselling had been established four years ago in response to an unmet need to provide support to communities in North and West Belfast affected by high levels of social deprivation,

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

addiction, suicide and self-harm. The organisation provided professional counselling, holistic therapies and bespoke educational/informative training programmes to community groups, professional and statutory agencies and those experiencing mental health issues and life-changing events.

She highlighted the fact that Compass Counselling required immediate investment to ensure its survival and urged the Council to support its call for the Minister of Health to demonstrate his commitment to tackling mental health, as outlined within the New Decade, New Approach deal, by saving it from closure.

Ms. Irwin reported that Compass Counselling had provided around 900 sessions per year since it had opened. The number of staff employed within the organisation had increased from three to twelve over the past four years and currently comprised Directors, clinical supervisors, accredited counsellors, holistic therapists, positive psychology mentors, nutritional advisors and final year placement counsellors. Staff worked in a voluntary capacity and the organisation was self-funding, mainly through fundraising and contributions. She pointed out that the increased demand for the organisation's services had grown to the extent that it now required significant support to continue to operate.

Ms. Whelan outlined the valuable support which she had obtained from Compass Counselling during a difficult period in her life and confirmed that she was now a volunteer in the organisation and was training to become a counsellor. She too highlighted the need for the Council and others to do everything within their power to save this vital service.

The deputation was thanked by the Lord Mayor.

The Council noted the information which had been provided and that it would have an opportunity to discuss the issue later in the meeting.

**Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies**

The Chief Executive reported that notification has been received from the Sinn Féin Party of the following changes:

- Councillor Gormley to replace former Councillor Hargey on the South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership and on the Forward South Belfast Partnership Board; and
- Councillor Magee to replace Councillor Magennis on the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership.

The Council approved the changes.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**

Moved by Alderman Kingston,  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st February, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

**Amendment**

**Financial Reporting – Quarter 3 2019/20**

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by Councillor Magennis,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st February, under the heading “Financial Reporting – Quarter 3 2019/20, be amended to provide that the Council agrees to provide additional support of £100k to the Ulster Boxing Council to host the 2020 EUBC Schoolboys and Schoolgirls European Boxing Championships from 7th June till 11th July and agrees further to allocate £20k to Compass Counselling, subject to it meeting the Council’s due diligence requirements.

The Chief Executive pointed out that Standing Order 16(a) stated that any amendment to a motion to approve and adopt the minutes of a meeting by the Council must not lay any greater financial burden on the meeting than the decision within the Committee minutes. On that basis, the request to fund Compass Counselling would need to be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

Accordingly, Councillor Murphy’s amendment was revised to the effect that the Council agrees:

- to provide additional support of £100k to the Ulster Boxing Council to host the 2020 EUBC Schoolboys and Schoolgirls European Boxing Championships from 7th June till 11th July; and
- that the matter of the allocation of £20k to Compass Counselling be referred to the next monthly meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

On a vote by show of hands twenty-three Members voted for the amendment and thirty against and it was declared lost.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor McDonough-Brown,  
Seconded by Councillor Long and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees that the request to provide additional support of £100k to the Ulster Boxing Council to host the 2020 EUBC Schoolboys and Schoolgirls European Boxing Championships from 7th June till 11th July and for £20k to be allocated to Compass Counselling be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,  
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st February, under the heading “Financial Reporting – Quarter 3 2019/20”, be amended to provide that funding of £75k be awarded to the Belfast Advice Group (Belfast Tribunal Service) to cover the period from April 2020 to June 2020.

On a vote by show of hands twenty-seven Members voted for the amendment and seventeen against and it was declared carried.

**Amendment**

**Motion – Belfast Zoo**

Moved by Councillor Maskey,  
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st February, under the heading “Motion – Belfast Zoo” be amended to allow for the motion to read as follows:

“This Council reaffirms its support for the Belfast Zoo and its staff and its long term sustainability and future investment. We also commit ourselves to a moral and compassionate approach to the animals housed in the Zoo and commit to ensure a future use that is conservation centred, educational and economically modelled that it ends the burden on the Belfast ratepayer.

The Council agrees to scope future investment and a feasibility study for the entire Zoo site, including the Floral Hall, Belfast Castle and the Belfast Hills. This will be done in conjunction with leading experts, key stakeholders and public consultation and engagement.

Additionally, we seek an all-Party meeting with the Minister for the Economy to push for Central Government funding for the redevelopment of the Zoo site.”

At the request of Councillor Whyte, the proposer agreed to amend his motion to allow for the replacement of the word “redevelopment” with the word “regeneration” in the final paragraph.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

At the request of Alderman Spence, the proposer agreed to the inclusion of the words “looking specifically at ecology” after the word “educational” in the initial paragraph and to the Minister for Communities being included in the all-Party meeting.

On a recorded vote thirty-nine Members voted for the motion, as amended and set out hereunder, and twenty against and it was declared carried:

“This Council reaffirms its support for the Belfast Zoo and its staff and its long term sustainability and future investment. We also commit ourselves to a moral and compassionate approach to the animals housed in the Zoo and commit to ensure a future use that is conservation centred, educational, looking specifically at ecology, and economically modelled that it ends the burden on the Belfast ratepayer.

The Council agrees to scope future investment and a feasibility study for the entire Zoo site, including the Floral Hall, Belfast Castle and the Belfast Hills. This will be done in conjunction with leading experts, key stakeholders and public consultation and engagement.

Additionally, we seek an all-Party meeting with the Minister for the Economy and the Minister for Communities to push for Central Government funding for the regeneration of the Zoo site.”

<b><u>For 39</u></b>	<b><u>Against 20</u></b>
The Lord Mayor (Councillor D. Baker); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Aldermen Haire, Kingston, McCoubrey, Sandford and Spence; and Councillors S. Baker, Beattie, Black, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Dorrian, Garrett, Gormley, Graham, Groves, Heading, Hussey, T. Kelly, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCusker, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Pankhurst, Walsh and Whyte.	The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds); Aldermen Copeland and Rodgers; and Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Harvey, Howard, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, Kyle, Long, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, Mulholland, Nicholl, O’Hara and Smyth.

**Northern Ireland Water Refillation  
Campaign and Water Refill Stations**

At the request of Councillor Garrett, the Chief Executive confirmed that the seven independent community centres, namely, Ballymacarrett, Denmark Street, Grosvenor, Hanwood, Percy Street, Sally Gardens and Shaftesbury, along with Dunville Park and Falls Park would be included in the City water refill scheme.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

**Proposed Approach to Enable the Strategic Consideration  
of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Council agreed that a report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee outlining ways in which the process for dealing with amendments to minutes/motions at Council meetings could be enhanced.

**Amendment**

**Irish Unity Referendum –  
Response from Governments**

Moved by Councillor Brooks,  
Seconded by Alderman Kingston,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st February, under the heading “Irish Unity Referendum – Response from Governments”, be amended to provide that the responses be noted and no further action be taken.

On a vote by show of hands seventeen Members voted for the amendment and twenty-five against and it was declared lost.

**Amendment**

**Fleet Programme – Lord Mayor’s Car**

Moved by Councillor Beattie,  
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st February, under the heading “Fleet Programme – Lord Mayor’s Car”, be amended to provide that the final decision on the type of model to be selected be taken by the Committee.

On a vote by show of hands twenty Members voted for the amendment and eighteen against and it was declared carried.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendments and additions, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 21st February, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

**People and Communities Committee**

Moved by Councillor Michael Collins,  
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 4th February be approved and adopted.

**Amendment**

**Request for the Hire of Botanic  
Gardens for a Series of Music Events**

Moved by Councillor Garrett,  
Seconded by Councillor Gormley,

That the decision of the People and Committee of 4th February, under the heading "Request for the Hire of Botanic Gardens for a Series of Music Events", be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees to adhere to its previous decision to approve the application for one year only, that is, 2020, and to consider the application for 2021 and 2022 after that event.

On a vote by show of hands eighteen Members voted for the amendment and forty against and it was declared lost.

**Amendment**

**Motion – Irish Language Street Signage Policy**

Moved by Councillor Beattie,  
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

Resolved – That the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 4th February, under the heading "Motion – Irish Language Street Signage Policy", be amended to provide that the report on the proposals outlined within the motion and the impact on the current policy be submitted instead to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 4th February were approved and adopted.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee**

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 12th and 26th February be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

**Requests for Matters to be Taken  
Back for Further Consideration**

**Draft Belfast Off-Street Parking Order**

At the request of Councillor Kyle, the Council agreed that the minute of the meeting of 12th February, under the heading "Draft Belfast Off-Street Parking Order", insofar as it relates to the car parks in Westminster Avenue East, West and North, be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

**A City Imagining Investment Programme –  
Cultural Multi-Annual Grants**

At the request of Councillor Beattie, the Council agreed that the minute of the meeting of 26th February, under the heading "A City Imagining Investment Programme – Cultural Multi-Annual Grants", insofar as it relates to parts iv. and v. of the decision, be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing omissions, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 12th and 26th February were approved and adopted.

**Licensing Committee**

Moved by Councillor S. Baker,  
Seconded by Councillor Donnelly and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 19th February, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Planning Committee**

Moved by Councillor Carson,  
Seconded by Councillor Garrett and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 11th February, 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 Mulholland,  
Seconded by Councillor Walsh and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 17th February be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

**Brexit Committee**

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,  
Seconded by Councillor Walsh and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 20th February be approved and adopted.

**Notices of Motion**

**School Uniform Exchange**

In accordance with notice on the agenda, the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds) proposed:

“This Council agrees to introduce, in liaison with community partners, a school uniform exchange across Belfast, where items can be donated or claimed, free of charge, to help provide parents with good quality, clean and pre-worn uniforms and P.E kits; to help, in liaison with community partners, to make exchange available to all, without prejudice or means testing; and to liaise with other councils in Northern Ireland who already provide/have agreed to provide a similar service.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Howard.

The proposer declined a request from Alderman Rodgers to amend his motion to the effect that the Council would seek a meeting with the Education Authority, the Department of Education, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and grammar schools’ representatives to obtain their views.

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

**Dunmurry Manor Care Home**

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

“This Council reiterates its support for the Dunmurry Manor families in their campaign to bring justice to the victims of abuse.

The Council notes the 59 recommendations listed in the Commissioner for Older People’s ‘Home Truths’ report and calls upon the Minister of Health to ensure that the recommendations are adopted for implementation as soon as possible. It notes also the work carried out on behalf of the Department of Health by CPEA Ltd. into the care of older people in residential homes.

Accordingly, the Council welcomes this work and calls upon the Minister to publish in full the CPEA Ltd. report as soon as possible.”

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

The motion was seconded by Councillor Lyons.

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

**Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland –  
Inclusion of Mysogyny as a Standalone Offence**

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

“This Council recognises the impact of misogyny and transmisogyny on those affected by it, as well as the role these attitudes play in a variety of crimes, including harassment, assault, sexual assault and hate crimes, and on the career choices and personal lives of women, girls and non-binary people.

The Council supports the inclusion of misogyny as a standalone offence and as a category of hate crime, recognising crimes targeted at women including trans women as hate crimes based on misogyny, and will write a letter to that effect to Judge Desmond Marrinan, as part of his ongoing review of hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland.

The Council supports also the Raise Your Voice Project, which tackles sexual harassment and sexual violence across Northern Ireland, by placing posters in all Council properties to raise awareness of the project.”

The motion was seconded by the High Sheriff (Councillor Verner).

The proposer agreed, at the request of Councillor Ferguson, to amend her motion to provide for the addition of the following wording after the final paragraph:

“The Council will invite representatives of the Raise Your Voice project to deliver training for Members on the realities facing victims of sexual harassment and violence and how we can best equip ourselves to assist them in our role as Elected Members.”

The proposer declined a request from Councillor S. Baker to refer the motion to the relevant Committee to allow for a report to be prepared on the definitions of all hate crimes, with a view to formulating a more comprehensive response to the review of hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland.

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

“This Council recognises the impact of misogyny and transmisogyny on those affected by it, as well as the role these attitudes play in a variety of crimes, including harassment, assault, sexual assault and hate crimes, and on the career choices and personal lives of women, girls and non-binary people.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

The Council supports the inclusion of misogyny as a standalone offence and as a category of hate crime, recognising crimes targeted at women including trans women as hate crimes based on misogyny, and will write a letter to that effect to Judge Desmond Marrinan, as part of his ongoing review of hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland.

The Council supports also the Raise Your Voice Project, which tackles sexual harassment and sexual violence across Northern Ireland, by placing posters in all Council properties to raise awareness of the project.

The Council will invite representatives of the Raise Your Voice project to deliver training for Members on the realities facing victims of sexual harassment and violence and how we can best equip ourselves to assist them in our role as Elected Members.”

**SUDS and the City**

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

“This City has a big vision, including realising aspirations for City centre living, whilst dually supporting environmental sustainability. One obvious way of contributing to these somewhat conflicting goals is via SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems).

There is real potential for SUDS at viable, multi-impact community sites to substantially support the immediate locality and wider City infrastructure.

SUDS can help to prevent water pollution, slow down surface water run-off and reduce risk of general and sewer flooding during heavy rain. Additionally, it can help to create, or contribute to, habitats for wildlife in dense urban areas and quality green spaces.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to explore mechanisms to support SUDS and to write to the Department for Infrastructure, NI Water and the Living with Water Programme Board to highlight the value of SUDS progression at an existing viable location, namely, Distillery Street/Westlink.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McLaughlin.

The proposer agreed, at the request of Councillor Smyth, to amend her motion to provide for the addition of the following wording at the end of the final paragraph: “with a view to finding a long-term solution for SUDS to be used in development and retrofit across the region and to link it to the One Million Trees project, as both provide interconnected solutions to how we manage water and drainage across the City.”

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

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

“This City has a big vision, including realising aspirations for City centre living, whilst dually supporting environmental sustainability. One obvious way of contributing to these somewhat conflicting goals is via SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems).

There is real potential for SUDS at viable, multi-impact community sites to substantially support the immediate locality and wider City infrastructure.

SUDS can help to prevent water pollution, slow down surface water run-off and reduce risk of general and sewer flooding during heavy rain. Additionally, it can help to create, or contribute to, habitats for wildlife in dense urban areas and quality green spaces.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to explore mechanisms to support SUDS and to write to the Department for Infrastructure, NI Water and the Living with Water Programme Board to highlight the value of SUDS progression at an existing viable location, namely, Distillery Street/Westlink, with a view to finding a long-term solution for SUDS to be used in development and retrofit across the region and to link it to the One Million Trees project, as both provide interconnected solutions to how we manage water and drainage across the City.”

**Higher Education Tuition Fees**

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

“This Council:

- i. recognises the important contribution which higher education institutions and their students make to the economy of Belfast and believes that all people, irrespective of their socio-economic background, should be able to access higher education if they choose to do so;
- ii. notes that research by University College London and Universities UK shows that tuition fees and the loans system can create a barrier to accessing higher education to those from lower income backgrounds;
- iii. recognises the wider need for the Northern Ireland Executive to increase the current Northern Ireland student admissions cap, to meet the demand for places; and
- iv. resolves to write to the Minister for the Economy asking her to rule out an across the board increase in tuition fees, which would further limit access to university to those from lower income backgrounds, and to undertake an urgent review of the current funding for universities in Northern Ireland so that a sustainable funding model can be achieved.”

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

The motion was seconded by Councillor McKeown.

At the request of Councillor Flynn, the proposer agreed to amend his motion to provide for:

- the insertion of the following paragraph between paragraphs iii. and iv:

“notes with concern that differences between how student finance companies in Great Britain and Northern Ireland assess a student’s course for funding means that some students who choose to start a full-time course, after having previously undertaken a part-time course for a year, are being denied access to their extra funding year;” and

- the addition of the following wording after the word “her” in the final paragraph:

“to consider the discrepancies outlined above in relation to extra funding years, to commit to bringing student finance guidelines in Northern Ireland into line with student finance authorities in Great Britain and”

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

This Council:

- i. recognises the important contribution which higher education institutions and their students make to the economy of Belfast and believes that all people, irrespective of their socio-economic background, should be able to access higher education if they choose to do so;
- ii. notes that research by University College London and Universities UK shows that tuition fees and the loans system can create a barrier to accessing higher education to those from lower income backgrounds;
- iii. recognises the wider need for the Northern Ireland Executive to increase the current Northern Ireland student admissions cap, to meet the demand for places;
- iv. notes with concern that differences between how student finance companies in Great Britain and Northern Ireland assess a student’s course for funding means that some students who choose to start a full-time course, after having previously undertaken a part-time course for a year, are being denied access to their extra funding year; and
- v. resolves to write to the Minister for the Economy asking her to consider the discrepancies outlined above in relation to extra funding years, to commit to bringing student finance guidelines in Northern Ireland into

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

line with student finance authorities in Great Britain and to rule out an across the board increase in tuition fees, which would further limit access to university to those from lower income backgrounds, and to undertake an urgent review of the current funding for universities in Northern Ireland so that a sustainable funding model can be achieved.”

**Relationship and Sexual Education**

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

“This Council notes the importance of accurate, inclusive, age appropriate Relationship and Sexual Education (RSE) in the development of young people and the formation of healthy, safe and fulfilling attitudes towards relationships, sexuality and intimacy.

The Council endorses the Belfast Youth Forum's recent report on Relationship and Sexual Education entitled 'Any use?' and notes with dismay that, of the 2/3 of respondents who actually received RSE in school, 60% indicated that they felt that the information they received was either 'not very useful' or 'not useful at all'.

The Council supports the three asks in this report, namely:

1. that a rights based and proactive approach to RSE should be adopted;
2. that a curriculum programme and relevant interventions be co-developed with young people.
3. that specialist staff should deliver RSE.

Given that 86% of respondents believed that the school environment was the best place to receive RSE, the Council agrees to write to the Minister of Education requesting him to endorse this report and the recommendations made within it and to consider the implementation of the three main asks.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor O'Hara.

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

**Standing Order 23**

During debate on the previous motion, the Council's attention was drawn to the fact that, in accordance with Standing Order 23, any meeting of the Council which has lasted continuously for five hours shall stand adjourned unless the Council shall by resolution decide to continue sitting.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Mulholland,  
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey and

Resolved – That the Council agrees to continue to sit to until the remaining business has been concluded.

**Compass Counselling**

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

“This Council notes with deep concern that the mental health organisation Compass Counselling is facing imminent closure.

The Council recognises that we have huge problems in our community around mental health related issues and that this is a vital organisation in helping the citizens of Belfast to address these problems.

The Council declares its support for this organisation to remain open and requests that officers organise at the earliest opportunity a cross party delegation, made up of Elected Members and officers and involving the Department of Health and all other relevant agencies, to discuss ways of intervening in order to save this important organisation, so that it can continue to keep its doors open in the period ahead.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Ferguson.

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

**DNA Testing of Dog Fouling**

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

“This Council notes:

- the high number of complaints and the frustration of residents regarding dog fouling;
- that cleansing, signage and bins to address the issues come at considerable cost to ratepayers, as well as being a public health risk; and
- that other councils have piloted and adopted new methods for tackling persistent problems, notably DNA testing on dog fouling;

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd March, 2020**

The Council agrees, therefore, to undertake its own scoping exercise of DNA testing and to bring back recommendations on whether it is something that could be adopted for Belfast.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor M. Kelly.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the People and Communities Committee.

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson