

Recent Violence and Public Disorder

“This Council condemns the recent serious violence and public disorder that took place not only in Belfast, but across Northern Ireland

It condemns paramilitarism, the use of violence for political ends and the exploitation of young people and working class communities.

We were deeply troubled to see images of children and young people involved in violence and deplore the risk of another generation seeing violence as a response to political frustrations. Whilst matters have thankfully settled over the past 2 weeks, we still believe that the underlying issues prevail and the threat of violence is near too far away from the surface in Northern Ireland.

As the main political body of this city, we have a moral and ethical duty to do everything we can to protect our citizens, particularly those young people at risk of being manipulated into street violence, as well as our duty of care to front line council staff carrying out daily essential services. We must also move away from simply offering condemnation and begin to look at solutions that will offer our young people hope and invest in their futures.

This Council will: commit to supporting all elements of the Youth Service, including our own Belfast Youth Forum; and will convene an urgent meeting of the relevant statutory agencies and third sector organisations to develop a consistent, young person led approach for the coming summer period; engage with relevant departments to ensure that discretionary funding is made available to support youth engagement and intervention; engage with Trade Unions to ensure safety of our staff and; will support the ongoing process for the formation of a NI Youth Assembly; and seek assurances that Youth Citizens' Assemblies will be considered as an engagement model to make recommendations for the city on addressing poverty, inequality, eradicating paramilitarism, integrating communities, expanding opportunity and tackling the climate crises.”

Proposer: Councillor Smyth

Seconder: Councillor Mulholland

(To be referred without discussion to the People and Communities Committee)