

# **Council**

## **MONTHLY MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**

Held in the City Hall on Monday, 1st April, 2019  
at 6.00 o'clock p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Hargey) (Chairperson); the High Sheriff (Alderman Sandford); Aldermen Browne, Convery, Copeland, Haire, Kingston, McCoubrey, McGimpsey, L. Patterson, Rodgers and Spence; and Councillors Armitage, Attwood, Baker, Beattie, Black, Boyle, Campbell, Canavan, Carson, Clarke, Collins, Corr, Corr-Johnston, Craig, Dorrian, Dudgeon, Garrett, Graham, Groves, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, Johnston, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Mullan, Murphy, Newton, Nic Biorna, Nicholl, O'Donnell, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Reynolds and Walsh.

### **Summons**

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McDonough-Brown) and Councillors Bunting, McAllister, McAteer, McReynolds and O'Neill.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Minutes of the Council**

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Hargey),  
Seconded by Councillor Hutchinson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 4th March be taken as read and signed as correct.

### **Official Announcements**

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, extended her condolences to Councillor McAteer on the recent death of her niece, Nuala.

The Lord Mayor referred to the fact that Councillor Kyle had on 31st March retired from his role as a GP and, on behalf of the Council, wished him well in his retirement.

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**Changes to Committees**

The Council noted that the nominating officer of the Ulster Unionist Party had confirmed that, with effect from 1st April:

- Alderman Rodgers had replaced Councillor Johnston on the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and as the Chairperson of that Committee; and
- Councillor Johnston had replaced Alderman Rodgers on the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

**Request to Address the Council**

The Chief Executive reported that a request to address the Council had been received from representatives of two suicide support groups in relation to the motion on Suicide Prevention being proposed by Councillor Armitage.

The Council acceded to the request and, accordingly, Ms. Claire Curran of Survivors of Suicide Support Group, together with Ms. Margaret Walker and Mr. Brendan Lowe of Suicide Awareness and Support Group, were welcomed by the Lord Mayor.

Ms. Curran informed the Council that Survivors of Suicide Support Group, which was based in East Belfast, worked with families who had been bereaved by suicide, as well as people who were at risk from or had attempted suicide. Each year, around 300 people died in Northern Ireland from suicide and the rate per 100,000 of the population was higher than in the rest of the United Kingdom and in the Republic of Ireland. She referred to the opening in the City in the previous week of a Crisis De-escalation Service, on a one-year pilot basis, which she pointed out had taken over two years to put in place, and stressed that, whilst that was encouraging, significantly more support was required. She highlighted the fact that the absence of a functioning Executive had stalled the implementation of the Protect Life 2 Strategy and associated action plan and concluded by stressing that there was an onus on everyone to play their part in reducing the number of deaths by suicide by for example, recognising signs, undertaking training and raising awareness.

Mr. Lowe reported that his mother had died as a result of suicide ten years earlier and outlined the devastating impact which her death had had on him. He explained that he had, amongst other things, attempted suicide and highlighted the valuable support which he had received from Suicide Awareness and Support Group and his family over the course of his ongoing recovery. He endorsed the comments which had been made by Ms. Curran around the need for more support to be allocated to suicide prevention and suggested that a designated officer be deployed in the City.

The Lord Mayor thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

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

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**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**

Moved by Alderman Rodgers,  
Seconded by Alderman Browne,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd March be approved and adopted.

**Amendment**

**Motion: Rainbow Flag at City Hall**

Moved by Councillor Campbell,  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd March, under the heading "Motion: Rainbow Flag at City Hall", be amended to provide that the words "in the illuminate programme" be removed from the amendment recorded in the minute.

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

**Request for a Matter to be  
Taken Back to Committee**

**Revision of the Council's Scheme of Allowances**

At the request of Councillor Reynolds, the Council agreed that the minute under the heading "Revision of the Council's Scheme of Allowances" be taken back to the Committee to allow for an independent legal opinion to be provided.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendment and omission, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd March were thereupon approved and adopted.

**People and Communities Committee**

Moved by Councillor Nicholl,  
Seconded by Councillor Magee and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 5th March be approved and adopted.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee**

Moved by Councillor Lyons,  
Seconded by Councillor Mullan,

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That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 6th and 27th March be approved and adopted.

**Pilot Public Art Project**

At the request of Councillor Baker, the Council agreed that the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 27th March, under the heading "Pilot Public Art Project", be amended to provide that the project be branded as 'Belfast Canvas'.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 6th and 27th March were thereupon approved and adopted.

**Licensing Committee**

Moved by Councillor O'Hara,  
Seconded by Councillor Dudgeon and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 20th March, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Planning Committee**

Moved by Councillor Garrett,  
Seconded by Councillor Armitage and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 12th March, 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 Alderman Haire,  
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 20th March be approved and adopted.

**Brexit Committee**

Moved by Councillor Walsh,  
Seconded by Councillor Campbell and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 21st March be approved and adopted.

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**Notice of Motion**

**Suicide Prevention**

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

“This Council is deeply saddened by the increasing numbers of people dying by suicide in the city of Belfast. The Council recognises that each death is preventable and, therefore, is an even more painful episode for all; and understands the deep pain shared by families and close friends of those who have died by suicide.

Belfast needs to become a city safe from suicide and the Council needs to work with others to make Belfast a Zero Suicide City. This includes making the safe house in the City Centre permanent, supporting and resourcing those groups who work in counselling and suicide prevention, challenging the taboos of mental health and suicide and ensuring that there is adequate training and resources for all the citizens so that Belfast can react positively to assist those in need.

The Council also calls on the Northern Ireland Assembly to implement the Protect Life 2 Strategy on suicide prevention.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Attwood.

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

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson