

North/South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuidh/Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC LAN 1 (10) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY SECTORAL FORMAT

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

26 MAY 2010

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The tenth North South Ministerial Council meeting in Language Body sectoral format was held in Armagh on 26 May, 2010. The meeting was attended by Pat Carey TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Nelson McCausland MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure and Cairíona Ruane, MLA, Minister for Education. Minister Carey chaired the meeting. The meeting dealt with issues relating to the Language Body and its two constituent agencies, Tha Boord o Ulstèr Scotch (The Ulster-Scots Agency) and Foras na Gaeilge (The Irish Language Agency).

Progress Reports

2. The Council received progress reports from Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency on developments to date in 2010. Ministers noted the ongoing collaboration between the Agencies including :
 - organisation of a lecture series "*Aspects of our Shared Heritage*" in Dungannon and South Tyrone Council and in Derry, and arrangements in hand to offer the series more widely and to add a new lecture on Flight and Plantation.

- screening of “The Hamley Tongue – Cultúr Ceilte” on TG4 on 20th January 2010 which portrayed the Ulster-Scots language in a balanced and fair way and will enhance awareness and understanding of Ulster-Scots amongst the Irish speaking community;

Ministers also noted progress by the Agencies including :

- introduction by Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch of a new Community Workers Scheme in order to improve capacity in community groups and appointment of administrative workers on a part-time basis in 8 community and voluntary organisations;
- commencement of an independent evaluation of organisations which receive core-funding from Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch, and
- publication of a new Irish language weekly newspaper, Gaelscéal in addition to other educational material.

North/South Language Body Business Plans and Budget 2010

3. The Council discussed the main priorities for the two agencies in 2010 and the progress in finalising the business plans and budgets.

Ulster-Scots Agency

4. The Council noted the improvement in corporate governance and accountability within the Agency since December 2009. It agreed that the designation of the Interim Chief Executive would be extended until the end of December 2010 and noted the recruitment process for appointing a substantive Chief Executive to the Ulster-Scots Agency.

Foras na Gaeilge Staffing and Decentralisation

5. Ministers noted recent developments in recruitment, including that five offers of posts have been made for Gaoth Dobhair and four offers of posts have been made for Dublin. The Council approved the appointment, subject to the approval of the Finance Ministers, of additional contract staff for Foras na Gaeilge in respect of the new English-Irish Dictionary Project with the cost to be met by reallocation of funding within approved budgets.

Appointment of Board Members to the North South Language Body

6. The Council approved the appointment of Michael McLoone to the Board of the Ulster-Scots Agency and the extension of the terms of appointment of John Hunter and Tony Crooks to that Board.

Foras na Gaeilge Review of Core Funded Bodies

7. The Council noted proposals that future funding to the Irish language sector would be provided on the basis of a number of discrete schemes. They agreed in principle that these proposals are within the parameters of the NSMC decision of December 2009. Ministers decided that officials from the sponsor Departments should now work with Foras na Gaeilge to agree by end-June 2010 the detail of these proposals and a timescale for their implementation. In the context of such agreement being reached by end-June, Ministers agreed that interim funding may be provided by Foras na Gaeilge to existing funded organisations to end-December 2010. The question of further interim funding after end-2010 will be considered at the next NSMC meeting in Language format in the light of the progress made in the interim on implementation. Foras na Gaeilge consulted with the sector in the course of undertaking the review and there will be continued consultation during the course of the implementation process.

Presentations by Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster Scots Agency

8. The Council received a presentation by Foras na Gaeilge on the use of modern technology and other translation developments which will provide significant savings to all users and significant increases in consistency and standard of translation. The Ulster-Scots Agency made a presentation on its ongoing work within the Ulster-Scots community, including the significant developments on the Community Workers Scheme.

North South Language Body Annual Reports and Accounts

9. The Council noted that it is proposed that the 2006 Accounts for the Language Body will be laid before the Assembly and Oireachtas at the earliest possible date. The Council also noted that progress is being made in regard to the Annual Reports and Accounts for the years 2007 - 2009 and requested a further progress report at the next NSMC meeting in Language sectoral format.

Date of Next Meeting

10. The Council agreed to hold its next meeting in Language sectoral format in Autumn 2010.

**Joint Secretariat
26 May 2010**