

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

ELEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

21 JANUARY 2011

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The eleventh Plenary meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was held at the NSMC offices, Armagh on 21 January 2011.
2. The Northern Ireland Executive delegation was led by the First Minister, the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA and the deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MP MLA. The Irish Government delegation was led by the Taoiseach, Brian Cowen TD. A full list of the members of both delegations is attached as an Annex.
3. Ministers discussed a range of common challenges and shared views on the economy, the banks and NAMA. They recognised the constraints on budgets in both jurisdictions and the ongoing discussions between the two Finance Ministers to identify potential cost savings through co-operation and sharing were welcomed. There was a desire to maximise access to EU funding and resources.
4. The Council welcomed the continued commitment by the Irish Government to funding for the A5 and A8 Roads projects. The Council renewed its support for the development of a satellite radiotherapy service at Altnagelvin and Ministers agreed to consider the possibility of further support for the City of Derry Airport.

5. In discussion on challenges posed by the weather, flooding and influenza Ministers agreed that it would be important to build on existing co-operation in emergency planning.

JOINT SECRETARIES' PROGRESS REPORT

6. Ministers noted the Progress Report on the ten NSMC meetings which have been held since the last Plenary meeting in July 2010 and welcomed the mutually beneficial co-operation taken forward including that:

- At the Trade and Business Development meeting in November 2010, the EU Commissioner on Innovation Máire Geoghegan-Quinn offered Ministers her continuing support for their work in promoting the innovation agenda. *InterTradelreland* will dedicate resources specifically to increase cross-border collaborative participation in FP7.
- The new dual carriageway close to Newry was opened in July 2010 and development work has continued on the A5 (North West Gateway to Aughnacloy) and A8 (Belfast to Larne). These developments, along with progress already made in the overall motorway network in Ireland, will ensure greater road connectivity across the island.
- Provisional figures indicate significant reductions in the number of road deaths in both jurisdictions. Initiatives taken forward with the GAA and the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) have assisted in the delivery of road safety messages.
- The innovative North South Child Protection Hub was launched in November 2010 and the Child Protection Communication Strategy and Communiqué which will promote public awareness and assist everyone in their duty to safeguard children was also launched.
- Progress has continued on the All-Island Action Plan on Suicide Prevention, the establishment of the new media monitoring service in Northern Ireland and the completion of the all-island evaluation of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. A new action, "Suicide and the Economic Situation" has been included in the Action Plan.
- The development of a new satellite Radiotherapy Centre at Altnagelvin Hospital to which the Irish Government has agreed to provide a capital and revenue contribution, is continuing. Approximately one third of patients who will attend the Altnagelvin Centre will be from Donegal and the surrounding areas. The Executive Finance Minister in his statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly on the Executive's draft budget indicated that this key project will be able to proceed.
- The PEACE III Programme has approved 126 projects worth €207 million while the INTERREG IVA Programme has approved 49 projects

worth €153 million. Total expenditure on both programmes to date is €95.15 million, significantly above the cumulative target to end 2010.

- A 2010/11 Action Plan for the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy and a work programme to take a joint strategic approach to plant health and pesticides have been put in place. There has been ongoing co-operation in dealing with a number of outbreaks of *Phytophthora ramorum* in Japanese larch forests.
- The Rural Enabler Project, with approved funding of £2.7m under the PEACE III Programme, was endorsed by Ministers.
- A comprehensive and collaborative programme of work has been developed focusing on the early and continuing professional development of Irish Medium teachers.
- Collaborative work is also continuing on literacy and numeracy. A joint report by the two Education Inspectorates - *How to Promote Literacy and Numeracy in our Schools* - was published in December 2010.
- Illegally dumped waste at the sites in Slattinagh, Fermanagh and Trillick in Co. Tyrone has been removed. Following an evaluation, work will commence on the remaining 15 sites. Joint concerted enforcement actions to target shipments of waste are ongoing.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) are collaborating with a view to accessing funding for priority environmental research under the Seventh Framework (FP7), INTERREG and LIFE+ programmes.
- The restoration of the Royal Canal to reconnect it to the Shannon has been completed and a preferred route for the Clones to Upper Lough Erne section of the Ulster Canal has been identified.

CROSS –BORDER MOBILITY – NEW/EMERGING ISSUES

7. The Council noted that the Joint Secretariat has identified a number of potential new/emerging cross border mobility issues and that the Joint Secretariat will examine these issues in greater depth, in consultation with relevant Departments, agencies and other relevant bodies. A progress report will be presented to the next NSMC Institutional meeting. The Border People website has been linked to NI Direct and to Citizens Information.

PROGRESS ON A5 AND A8 ROADS PROJECTS.

8. The Council noted progress to date on the A5 (North West Gateway to Aghnacloy) and A8 (Belfast to Larne) projects approved the project milestones

and payment schedule and agreed to consider a further progress report at the next NSMC Plenary.

ST ANDREWS AGREEMENT REVIEW

9. The Council noted that the consultation with relevant Ministers in both jurisdictions on all aspects of the St Andrews Agreement Review is now near completion and taking account of the outcome of this consultation, the Review Group will prepare a report for consideration by NSMC at its Plenary meeting in June 2011.

NORTH SOUTH CONSULTATIVE FORUM

10. The Council noted the background and recent developments on a North South Consultative Forum and agreed to advance this issue at its June 2011 Plenary.

NORTH SOUTH PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

11. The NSMC noted the Communiqué issued by the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann following a North South Parliamentary Forum Conference held in Newcastle on 7/8 October 2010.

FUTURE NSMC MEETINGS

12. The Council approved a schedule of future NSMC meetings.

**Joint Secretariat
21 January 2011**

ANNEX A

**MEETING OF THE NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
ARMAGH
FRIDAY, 21 JANUARY 2011**

Northern Ireland Executive	Irish Government
The Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA First Minister	Brian Cowen TD Taoiseach and Minister for Foreign Affairs
Martin McGuinness MP MLA deputy First Minister	Mary Coughlan TD Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills and Minister for Health and Children
Sammy Wilson MP MLA Minister for Finance and Personnel	Mary Hanafin TD Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation
Michelle Gildernew MP MLA Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development	Eamon Ryan TD Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
Nelson McCausland MLA Minister of Culture Arts, and Leisure	Brendan Smith TD Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Minister for Justice and Law Reform
Caitríona Ruane MLA Minister of Education	Pat Carey TD Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs and Minister for Transport
Danny Kennedy MLA Minister for Employment and Learning	
Arlene Foster MLA Minister of Enterprise Trade and Investment	
David Ford MLA Minister of Justice	
Conor Murphy MP MLA Minister for Regional Development	
Alex Attwood MLA Minister for Social Development	
Robin Newton MLA (Junior Minister) OFMDFM	
Gerry Kelly MLA (Junior Minister) OFMDFM	