

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TRANSPORT MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH, AND BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

5 MAY 2021

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. A North South Ministerial Council Transport meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh and by videoconference on 5 May 2021. The meeting was attended by Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for Transport, Nichola Mallon MLA, Minister for Infrastructure, and Rt. Hon. Arlene Foster MLA, First Minister. Minister Ryan chaired the meeting.

EU FUNDING UPDATE

2. Ministers welcomed the continued co-operation between the Department for Infrastructure and the Department of Transport on EU funding related matters and the potential for significant funding opportunities for North/South Cooperation in the Transport sector.

NEW DECADE, NEW APPROACH COMMITMENTS

3. The Council noted progress achieved on the various commitments outlined in the *New Decade, New Approach* document, in particular in the area of infrastructural investment.

Cross Border Greenways

4. Ministers noted the ongoing work in relation to cross-border greenways.

A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC)

5. Ministers noted that following a Public Inquiry into the scheme in early 2020 the Department for Infrastructure received an Interim Report from the Planning Appeals Commission in September 2020.
6. The Council noted that the Minister for Infrastructure, having fully considered all the recommendations made in the Interim Report, has announced the next steps for the scheme, including the preparation of a further addendum to the Environmental Statement for consultation in early autumn, leading to the re-opening of the public inquiry early 2022. They also noted that both the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government remain committed to the A5 scheme.

High-Speed Rail Connectivity

7. Ministers noted that both Departments have further developed draft terms of reference for a strategic review of the heavy rail network on the island of Ireland, which will take account of the need for balanced regional development, particularly in relation to connectivity with the North-West.
8. The Council noted that the all-island Strategic Rail Review was jointly launched by Ministers Ryan and Mallon on 7 April 2021.
9. Ministers noted that this work and the study itself will be overseen by a High-Level Steering Group comprising representatives from both Departments, as well as transport authorities from both jurisdictions.

Narrow Water Bridge

10. The Council noted the commitments in *New Decade, New Approach* in relation to the Narrow Water Bridge and agreed that Departments will consider next steps to progress the scheme.

Renewed Air Services

11. Ministers noted that the review to explore potential Government support for renewed air services between Belfast/Cork and Derry~Londonderry/Dublin is being led by the Department of Transport, working with the Department for the Economy, and the UK Department for Transport.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

12. The Council noted updates provided by the Department of Transport in respect of a Sustainable Mobility Policy Review and the Department for Infrastructure in respect of transport decarbonisation policy development, including increasing sustainable and active travel.
13. Ministers noted that officials from both jurisdictions will continue to liaise on policy development in relation to Sustainable Transport and Travel.

14. The Council agreed that a further update, including on opportunities for future collaboration, will be provided at the next meeting.

REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME

15. The Ministers noted the outcome of the review carried out by both Departments in relation to the current NSMC Transport Sector Work Programme.
16. The Council agreed the revised Transport Work Programme.

SAFEFOOD BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2021

17. The Council approved the *safefood* Business Plan for 2021 and recommend a budget provision for 2021.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY CORPORATE PLAN 2021-2022 AND BUSINESS PLAN 2021

18. The Council approved the Corporate Plans 2020-2022 for Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency and 2021 Business Plans for both Agencies.
19. The Council recommended the budget provisions for Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency for 2021, and noted indicative budgets for Foras na Gaeilge and for the Ulster-Scots Agency for 2020 to 2022, which will be subject to budgetary considerations by both Administrations.

APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS TO THE NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY

20. The Council appointed Regina Uí Chollatáin (Chair) and Freda Nic Giolla Chatháin to the board of Foras na Gaeilge. The Council also appointed Freddie Kettyle (Vice-Chair), Allen McAdam, Lavinia Tilson and Karyn Devenney to the board of the Ulster-Scots Agency.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

21. The Council agreed to hold its next NSMC Transport meeting in late 2021.

**Joint Secretariat
5 May 2021**

Website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org