

North South Ministerial Council  
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta  
Thuaidh Theas  
An Chomhrúnaíocht

## **PAPER NSMC LAN 3 (13) JC**

### **NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

### **NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY MEETING**

### **NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH**

**20 NOVEMBER 2013**

### **JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. The twentieth North South Ministerial Council Language Body meeting was held in Armagh on 20 November 2013. The meeting was attended by Jimmy Deenihan, TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Dinny McGinley, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Carál Ní Chuilín, MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell, MLA. Minister McGinley chaired the meeting.

#### **NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY PROGRESS REPORTS**

2. Ministers noted progress reports from the Chairpersons and the Chief Executive Officers of Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency which include the following achievements relating to the period from July to November 2013:

### **Foras na Gaeilge:**

- Ongoing measures for implementation of the new core funding arrangements, including seeking expressions of interest from qualifying organisations wishing to be considered for selection as a lead organisation;
- Progress has been made with key schemes, including advertisement of Scéim na nOifigeach Gaeilge 2013 – 2016 (Irish Language Officers Scheme);
- In order to support the Irish language in the arts sector, 57 applications for funding were approved under the Festivals Scheme 2013 as well as 10 applications for funding under the Drama Companies Scheme 2013;
- 70 projects were approved in order to provide opportunities and events for 3,000 young people to use the Irish language; and
- 7 Irish language booklets were circulated with the Irish Daily Mail in September.

### **Ulster-Scots Agency:**

- Enrolment of 20 primary schools in the scheme to work towards securing Ulster-Scots flagship school status;
- Provision of support for the Walled City Tattoo, which attracted 13,979 visitors to Derry/Londonderry as part of the UK City of Culture Programme;
- Delivery of the Donegal Peace Prom in Letterkenny, which was the largest event of The Gathering in the county and also involved the Agency's first ever collaboration with the Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland;
- Showcasing Ulster-Scots culture at Cockle Row Cottages in Groomsport in conjunction with North Down Borough Council, which attracted over 17,000 visitors in July and August; and
- Development of an East-West heritage project with the Scottish Maritime Museum around the Ulster-Scots shipbuilders of Belfast.

and

### **progress on collaboration between the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge, including**

- Submission of the joint revised equality scheme to the Equality Commission for approval and updating of the safeguarding policy to include cyber-bullying;
- Development of an initiative to provide cultural workshops for secondary schools in the Integrated Sector in conjunction with delivery of the citizenship curriculum;
- A series of lectures which took place on Ulster placenames as part of two open days at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland; and
- Discussions on a number of joint projects, including a display about the charter towns, a series of lectures for key stage 3 children (ages 11-14) and a heritage project on the story of Hamilton and Montgomery (early Ulster-Scots settlers) and Con O'Neill (the dominant Irish landowner in Antrim/Down).

## **NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY CORPORATE PLANS 2014-16**

3. The Council noted the progress to date on the development of 2014-2016 Corporate Plans for Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency, including the emerging strategic objectives. Ministers further noted that draft 2014 Business Plans for Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency have been prepared with the focus on delivery of key priorities for each Agency. The Council also noted that the Sponsor Departments will work together to finalise the 2014 Business Plans and Budgets and the 2014-2016 Corporate Plans and, following Finance Ministers' approval, will bring them forward for approval at a future NSMC meeting.

## **NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS**

4. Ministers noted that the 2010 consolidated Language Body Annual Report and Accounts were laid in the Houses of the Oireachtas and in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 5 July 2013 and that it is envisaged that the 2011 consolidated Language Body Annual Report and Accounts will be certified and laid by 31 December 2013. The Council also noted, in regard to the 2012 consolidated Annual Report and Accounts, that the field audit has been completed for Foras na Gaeilge and is due to take place shortly for the Ulster-Scots Agency, and that certification by the Comptrollers & Auditors General will follow as soon as possible in the new year.
5. Ministers acknowledged the ongoing co-operation with the independent offices of the Comptrollers & Auditors General in both jurisdictions, as a result of which 11 consolidated Annual Reports and Accounts for the Language Body have been published in the period from 2005 to date.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

6. The Council agreed that its next Language Body meeting will take place in Spring 2014.

**Joint Secretariat  
20 November 2013**

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