

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC LAN 2 (13) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

19 JUNE 2013

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The eighteenth North South Ministerial Council Language Body meeting was held in Armagh on 19 June 2013. The meeting was attended by Jimmy Deenihan, TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 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.
2. 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).
3. Ministers discussed Foras na Gaeilge's review of core funding and it was agreed that a further meeting of the NSMC Language Body will be held as soon as possible but not later than September in order to bring the process to a conclusion.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY PROGRESS REPORTS

4. Ministers noted the progress reports from the Chairpersons and the Chief Executive Officers of the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge which included the following achievements from January to June 2013:

Ulster-Scots Agency

- Provision of support in the education system, including 16 after-school clubs in the primary sector and 2 educational fairs in the post-primary sector in addition to advancement of the Ulster-Scots flagship programme for primary schools;
- Promotion of Ulster-Scots culture through delivery of 3 talks at the Agency's interpretative centre and 7 seminars to raise awareness of Agency funded programmes for festivals and summer schools, in addition to support for a heritage event for over 400 people at the Presbyterian General Assembly held in Derry for the first time;
- Provision of community support, including funding for 6 Ulster-Scots community showcase events and funding to 195 groups for music and dance tuition; and
- Sponsorship of a plaque for James Bryce, a prominent Ulster-Scots of Edwardian times, which was unveiled in May 2013 on the 175th anniversary of his birth as part of the partnership programme with the Ulster History Circle.

Foras na Gaeilge

- An evaluation of the Summer Camps Scheme has been completed and funding will be provided for in excess of 50 camps catering for over 2,000 young people during July-August 2013;
 - The Irish Language Officers Scheme in the north, which aims to improve the status of the Irish language at local level and build on *Líofa 2015* by providing the public with a range of bilingual services, has been advertised for the period July 2013-March 2016;
 - A promotional campaign is underway throughout the public sector, north and south, in regard to the helpline *FREAGRA* which provides an Irish language translation service to the public sector; and
 - Organisation of a conference on minority languages in the arts, *Voces in Artes*, in May 2013 as part of Ireland's EU Presidency.
5. The Council also noted progress on collaboration between the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge in regard to governance issues and promotion of the work of the Language Body, including the establishment of a committee to oversee a joint work programme, the current consultation process on the joint Equality Scheme, and funding for 'The Honest Sod', a play in Ulster-Scots and Irish, which has toured to 88 schools and has been seen by over 3,000 pupils.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY BUSINESS PLANS AND BUDGETS

6. Ministers noted that the Sponsor Departments are working with Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency to finalise the 2013 Business Plans and Budgets and, following approval by Finance Ministers, will bring them forward for approval as soon as possible to a future NSMC language meeting.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

7. The Council noted that the 2010 consolidated Language Body Annual Report and Accounts were certified by the Comptrollers & Auditors General on 10 June 2013 and will be laid in the Houses of the Oireachtas and in the Northern Ireland Assembly in July 2013. Ministers further noted that it is envisaged by the Comptrollers & Auditors General that the 2011 Language Body Annual Report and Accounts will be certified in Autumn 2013 and that field audits will commence in September 2013 in regard to the 2012 Annual Report and Accounts. The Council also acknowledged the ongoing co-operation with the independent offices of the Comptrollers & Auditors General in both jurisdictions, as a result of which 10 Annual Reports and Accounts for the Language Body have been published in the period 2005-2012.

ULSTER-SCOTS AGENCY – DISCOVER ULSTER-SCOTS

8. Ministers noted the work being undertaken by the Ulster-Scots Agency to progress the Discover Ulster-Scots initiative. This will create a coherent branding capable of being applied to tourist products/experiences which are relevant to Ulster-Scots heritage and a single web-based access point where visitors will be able to find out about places to go and things to do which reflect Ulster-Scots heritage.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9. The Council agreed that its next Language Body meeting will take place as soon as possible but not later than September.

**Joint Secretariat
19 June 2013**

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