

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC LAN 1 (14) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY MEETING

ENNISKILLEN

3 APRIL 2014

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty first North South Ministerial Council Language Body meeting was held in Enniskillen on 3 April 2014. The meeting was attended by Carál Ní Chuilín, MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, 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, and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell, MLA. Minister Ní Chuilín chaired the meeting.

SECTORAL PRIORITIES

2. Ministers had a discussion on various priorities within their Departmental remits and noted that these will be contained in a report to be considered at a future NSMC Institutional meeting as part of the ongoing review into sectoral priorities.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY PROGRESS REPORTS

3. 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 November to March 2014:

Foras na Gaeilge:

New Funding Arrangements:

- Foras na Gaeilge has selected the six new lead organisations and has met with them to agree the extent of the functions in their respective areas;
- Core-funding for 10 of the existing 19 core funded organisations (4 in the north and 6 in the south) will continue to 30 June 2014. The six lead organisations, An tÁisaonad and two community radio stations (one in the north and one in the south) will continue to receive funding under the new funding arrangements after that date;
- Three advisors have been appointed by Foras na Gaeilge:
 - A change management consultant to provide advice to all 19 organisations to facilitate the necessary changes in their organisations;
 - A language planning advisor to advise the 6 lead organisations and the Language Development Forum on language planning issues; and
 - A strategic planning advisor to advise the 6 lead organisations on strategic planning issues.

Other Activities:

- Information from the survey on public attitudes to Irish has been put into the public domain as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge to illustrate the continued - and growing - goodwill towards the language.
- Funding has been awarded to 13 publishers under the Irish Language Books programme. A meeting of the Working Group on the Strategy for Reading has been held and a draft report is being discussed.

Ulster-Scots Agency:

- The Agency delivered a successful Burns Night Concert on 25 January 2014 at the Waterfront Hall in conjunction with the Ulster Orchestra. The concert featured Eddi Reader, with performances from the Ulster-Scots Agency Juvenile Pipe Band and Markethill Ulster-Scots Dancers.
- The Agency is developing an Ulster-Scots Innovators' Gallery in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Science Park. This will be installed in the Thompson Dock, where the Titanic was built and will be launched at the Belfast Maritime Festival in May.
- The Agency's Fair Faa Ye touring drama project completed a run of 100 performances in schools throughout Ulster in March 2014. A full post-project evaluation will be completed by the end of April. Initial feedback from schools

has been very positive, especially regarding learning outcomes for the children.

- The Agency has developed two levels of accreditation for Lambeg drumming which have been approved by the Open College Network (OCN). The Agency is currently going through the process of being recognised as an OCN Centre.
- The 2014 music and dance funding round was completed in January. 233 applications were received. Following eligibility checks, 170 applications were assessed, with funding to a total value of just under £310k being awarded.
- The Agency awarded three “Community Impact” grants to local groups in Killeel, Newtownstewart and Belfast towards the cost of full-time community development workers who will support and develop Ulster-Scots in their respective areas. Grants to a total value of £104,360 were awarded in February, with the groups expected to secure combined match funding of £26,250.
- In January 2014, the Agency relocated its Belfast headquarters from Great Victoria Street to the Corn Exchange Building in Gordon Street in the Cathedral Quarter area. This move will provide the Agency with improved office accommodation at a lower cost.

Progress on collaboration between the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge, including

- Revision of the joint equality scheme, including updating of the safeguarding policy on cyber-bullying; and
- A joint project in the integrated schools sector. Both Agencies held preliminary discussions with the NI Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) in January regarding the development of this joint project.

BUSINESS PLANS AND BUDGETS 2013 AND 2014 AND CORPORATE PLANS 2014 -2016

4. Ministers noted the position on the 2013 Business Plan and budget. They also noted on the progress being made by both Agencies on their key strategic direction and objectives in their respective draft Business Plans and Budgets for 2014 and Corporate Plans for 2014-2016. They noted that Sponsor Departments will continue to work together with the Agencies to finalise the Business Plans and Budgets for 2014 and the Corporate Plans for 2014-2016 that will be brought forward for approval at a future NSMC meeting.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

5. Ministers noted that the 2011 consolidated Language Body Annual Report and Accounts were laid in the Houses of the Oireachtas and in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 6 February 2014.
6. The Council noted that the 2012 accounts for both Agencies are being finalised by the Comptrollers and Auditors General and it is envisaged that the consolidated Language Body Annual Report and Accounts 2012 will be laid by summer 2014 also noting that the field work audits on the 2013 accounts will begin in summer 2014.
7. Ministers acknowledged the ongoing co-operation with the independent offices of the Comptrollers & Auditors General in both jurisdictions, as a result of which 12 consolidated Annual Reports and Accounts for the Language Body have been published in the period from 2005 to date.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY CODES OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF AND BOARD

8. Ministers approved the revised Codes of Conduct for staff and Board members of Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulstér-Scotch which have been reviewed and updated in particular to take into account issues related to potential conflict of interests.

FORAS NA GAEILGE- DICTIONARY PROJECT

9. The Council noted the continuing progress in regard to the publication of a new English/Irish dictionary, including the publication of an online version on www.focloir.ie in January 2013.
10. Ministers approved, within the existing budget, a revised timetable enabling additional material to be developed, which will exceed previously agreed project targets, on an incremental basis by end December 2015, with publication of a printed version in 2016.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11. The Council agreed that its next Language Body meeting will take place in October 2014.

**Joint Secretariat
3 April 2014**

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