

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC TRAN 1 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TRANSPORT MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

20 APRIL 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twelfth North South Ministerial Council Transport meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on 20 April 2012. The meeting was attended by Minister Kennedy, MLA, Minister for Regional Development, Minister Attwood MLA, Minister of the Environment and Minister Varadkar, TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport. Minister Kennedy chaired the meeting.

BELFAST DUBLIN RAIL LINK

2. The Council discussed progress by NIR and Irish Rail on improving the performance of the Enterprise service and noted that:
 - reliability and punctuality had improved significantly in recent months;
 - the companies are exploring the possibility of providing an hourly timetable. However this will require additional subvention beyond what is available within current budgets;
 - further short-term improvements to the service are due for completion in 2012, including work to improve locomotive reliability and reduce fuel consumption and equipping Enterprise trains with Wi-Fi;

- subject to the availability of funding, NIR has plans in the medium term to improve existing track quality;
- NIR is developing a business case for a multi-modal transport hub in Belfast's Great Victoria Street, which would improve city centre access for Enterprise passengers ;and
- longer-term investment possibilities could be considered within the context of forthcoming EU decisions on the next TEN-T programme.

ALL ISLAND FREIGHT FORUM

3. Ministers discussed progress on the work of the All Island Freight Forum and noted actions agreed by the Steering Group following the plenary event held in Belfast on 7 November 2011.

ROAD USER SAFETY

4. The Council welcomed continuing collaboration on the delivery of road safety strategies and the complementary approach to the Crashed Lives campaigns. They discussed the recent introduction in Ireland of lower Blood Alcohol Concentration levels for drivers and that officials from both jurisdictions will draw on this experience in future plans. Ministers welcomed the sharing of knowledge and experience to improve new driver safety and the ongoing work to implement the Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Act 2010 in Northern Ireland.

VEHICLE SAFETY

5. Ministers welcomed the continuing co-operation to proactively target a wide range of illegal activity within the goods haulage and passenger transport industries including:
 - an increased enforcement focus on bus and coach operators ;
 - discussions on a further series of cross border enforcement operations in 2012 in both jurisdiction;
 - co-operation in relation to vehicle standards including mutual recognition of vehicle type approval, the review of the use of agricultural vehicles in Ireland and exchange of data on and follow up of unroadworthy foreign vehicles in either jurisdictions; and
 - excellent co-operation on enforcement of EU tachograph and drivers hours rules and proposed training exchange for enforcement officers.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PENALTY POINTS

6. The Council noted that nominations have been sought to joint steering and working groups from representatives of relevant interests in both jurisdictions to take forward work on mutual recognition of penalty points. The terms of reference for the joint steering and working groups have been prepared and the timetable for delivery and implementation by 2014 will be prepared and progress reported to the next NSMC Transport meeting.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

7. Ministers noted continued co-operation between the National Sustainable Travel Office and the Travelwise Initiative in promoting walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing throughout the island including;
- the success of the Walk to School Week 2011 cross-border schools' challenge event and planning now underway for the 2012 event scheduled for 23rd May 2012;
 - the growth of car sharing throughout the island, including the recent launch of the carsharing.ie website and joint promotions of car sharing;
 - the progression of Workplace Travel Planning throughout the island;
 - a pilot Personalised Travel Plan initiative is underway in Galliagh and one has been undertaken in Adamstown with a new personalised travel project to be launched in late 2012;
 - an Active Travel Strategy for Northern Ireland under the title 'Building an Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland' will shortly be finalised;
 - the success of all-island Bike Week 2011 (18 – 26 June) and partnership arrangements are being put in place for a 2012 event (16 – 24 June 2012)
 - £3 million will be invested in Active Travel Demonstration Projects in Northern Ireland over the period 2012 – 15 and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will invest €23m in three Smarter Travel Areas between 2012 and 2016 to identify and develop best practice while €13m will be invested in infrastructure to support Active Travel Towns in the same period;
 - the success of the Dublinbikes public bike hire scheme and the commitment to seek to extend the Dublinbikes scheme across the wider Dublin area and to other cities and that a similar project is under consideration in Belfast;
 - the official opening of the Waterside Greenway project, the Canal Way and the Great Western Greenway; and
 - the cooperation of the Departments for Regional Development and Environment and ESB in managing the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS TO THE NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY AND INTERTRADEIRELAND

8. The Council approved the appointment of Éamonn Ó Gribín to the Board of the North South Language Body, with responsibility for the exercise of the functions of the Body through Foras na Gaeilge, and the appointment of John Corbett to the Board of InterTradeIreland.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9. The Council agreed to hold its next NSMC Transport meeting in October 2012.

Joint Secretariat
20 April 2012