

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC TRAN 2 (14) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TRANSPORT MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES

ARMAGH

5 NOVEMBER 2014

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. A North South Ministerial Council Transport meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on 5 November 2014. The meeting was attended by Paschal Donohoe, TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Danny Kennedy, MLA, Minister for Regional Development and Mark H Durkan MLA, Minister of the Environment. Minister Donohoe chaired the meeting.

OPENING REMARKS

2. Ministers discussed the UK road user levy for HGVs. They agreed to continue to liaise on the issue and its potential impacts.

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PRIORITIES

3. Ministers welcomed the continued cooperation between the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department for Regional Development on Strategic Transport Priorities throughout the island, including the ongoing engagement on key areas such as development of the strategic road network on the island, enhancing east west connections, driving a shift to public and

more sustainable modes of transport and exploring the potential for shared cross border public transport in border areas.

EU MATTERS/FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

4. The Council acknowledged the ongoing positive cooperation between relevant Departments on EU related Transport Issues and the opportunities which are being explored to pursue EU Funding in a mutually beneficial manner, including:
 - maximising cross-border Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Transport funding opportunities;
 - utilising INTERREG Programmes for joined up cross border Transport and Tourism infrastructure; and
 - pursuing Horizon 2020 Smart, Green and Integrated Transport cooperation opportunities.
5. Ministers noted the current position on key EU Dossiers of mutual interest including:
 - Europe 2020 mid-term review - outcome of the informal Ministerial meeting;
 - Port Services;
 - Cross-border exchange of information on road traffic offences;
 - 4th Railway Package; and
 - Single European Skies.
6. Ministers welcomed an update of the progress of the INTERREG IVA funded refurbishment works on the Dublin-Belfast Enterprise rail service and the Drogheda railway viaduct.

CYCLING/CROSS-BORDER GREENWAYS

7. The Council welcomed the continued investment by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department for Regional Development on the promotion and development of sustainable transport options, including cycling.
8. Ministers welcomed the strategic joint decision by the Department for Regional Development and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to support the identification, development and possible INTERREG V funding for cross border Greenways.
9. Ministers welcomed the work of DRD in establishing a *Greenways Working Group*, initially consisting of key stakeholders from Northern Ireland, to scope a plan for the development of Greenways and noted that DTTAS would welcome any invitation to be included in full, or in part, in this Working Group.

MAJOR ROAD PROJECTS

A5 PROJECT

10. The Council noted the ongoing public consultation in relation to the final report informing the Appropriate Assessment process and that the new Environmental Statement, when published, will be subject to public consultation and may lead to a further Public Inquiry.
11. Ministers also noted that both Governments remain committed to the A5 scheme.

A8 PROJECT

12. Ministers welcomed that the A8 project is progressing well and that the road is expected to open by spring 2015.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PENALTY POINTS

13. Ministers noted that a draft EU Directive facilitating the cross-border exchange of information on road safety related traffic is due to come into force in 2017 and will cover the offences being considered by the Mutual Recognition of Penalty Points (MRPP) project.
14. The Council noted that the MRPP Steering Group will continue to examine the Directive, and the outcome of a European Commission review of the need to strengthen enforcement with regard to traffic offences, and the implications of these for the MRPP project.
15. Ministers noted that the MRPP Working Group will meet to explore issues related to the counting down of penalty points in both jurisdictions and that both jurisdictions will continue to carry forward work regarding the prosecution of offences with a view to providing an update on those issues at a future NSMC Meeting.

ROAD USER AND VEHICLE SAFETY

16. The Council welcomed the continued sharing of knowledge and experience between officials from both jurisdictions on the delivery of road safety measures.
17. Ministers noted the progress and enactment of legislation in both jurisdictions designed to improve road safety, including measures and proposals to address drug and drink driving and reform of the learner driver regime.
18. The Council also welcomed the continuing proactive co-operation to target a wide range of illegal activity within the goods haulage and passenger transport industries including continuing liaison on successful cross border enforcement operations in 2014 in both jurisdictions.

19. Ministers noted the recent meeting of a Tripartite Enforcement Planning Forum to maximise the benefits of enforcement efforts and to identify synergies from a co-ordinated enforcement approach and welcomed the continued training exchange for enforcement officers.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20. The Council agreed to hold its next NSMC Transport meeting in April 2015.

**Joint Secretariat
5 November 2014**

Website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org