

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC LAN 1 (16) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

24 JUNE 2016

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty-sixth North South Ministerial Council Language Body meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 24 June 2016. The meeting was attended by Paul Givan MLA, Minister for Communities, Chris Hazzard MLA, Minister for Infrastructure and Seán Kyne TD, Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs and Natural Resources. Minister Givan chaired the meeting.
2. Ministers acknowledged the work of Joe McDonagh, former chair of Foras na Gaeilge who recently passed away and expressed their condolences to his family and colleagues.
3. The Chief Executive Officers provided a high level overview on the operational activities of the Agencies of the North South Language Body

PROGRESS REPORTS

4. Ministers noted progress reports from the Chairperson of the Ulster-Scots Agency and the Chief Executive Officers of the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge which included the following achievements relating to the period from November 2015 to June 2016:-

Ulster-Scots Agency

- A Burns Night Concert in the Ulster Hall on January 2016, headlined by leading Scots traditional musicians, the Ulster Orchestra and a host of local talent;
- Primary Schools' WWI Drama Project which involved 32 primary schools attending performances of Phillip Orr's play "Wae a Hairt an a Hauf" performed at Fort Dunree (Co Donegal); Cavan County Museum; The Somme Heritage Centre (Co Down); and Mossley Mill (Co Antrim). Over 1400 pupils were involved in the project;
- The inaugural Ulster-Scots Science Week from 23-27 May 2016, with pupils from 5 primary schools participating in science workshops based around the Ulster-Scots innovators Harry Ferguson, Frank Pantridge and Lord Kelvin; and
- The Bruce Medieval Festival, held over the weekend of 4-5 June 2016, attracted more than 3,000 visitors to Carrickfergus;

Foras na Gaeilge

- The online version of the New English Irish Dictionary is 100% completed with 130,000 sense units and the number of people using Foras na Gaeilge's dictionary and terminology sites (www.focloir.ie, www.tearma.ie and www.teanlann.ie) continues to grow;
- A portal website for the Irish language and Foras na Gaeilge's new corporate website have been developed and both will be launched on 29 June 2016;
- Grants to the value of €158,417 were approved for 69 summer camps which will facilitate in excess of 3,000 children;
- Foras na Gaeilge has been awarded the NSAI (National Standards of Ireland) SWiFT 3000 award for the second time and also the Gold Standard. Both awards acknowledge excellence in Corporate Governance; and
- Foras na Gaeilge presented the results of the all-island survey on attitudes to the Irish language.

and

- (i) progress on collaboration between the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge, including:-
 - Both agencies are examining the possibility of taking part in the United Youth Programme as was laid out in OFMDFM's Strategy "Together

Building a United Community” in order to provide an outlet for 10,000 young people who are not in training, education or employment;

- The two agencies are engaged in year three of a programme designed to inform pupils and raise their awareness of Irish language and linguistic heritage, and Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language;
- The feasibility of publishing a trilingual version (Irish, Ulster-Scots and English) of Philip Robinson’s book on the “*Flora and Fauna of Northern Ireland*” is being explored; and
- Consideration is being given to developing a poetry/singing project for primary school children which will include the works of Robbie Burns and others.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY BUSINESS PLANS AND BUDGETS 2016

5. The NSMC noted that previous Sponsor and Finance Ministers had approved the Business Plans and Budgets for Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency, which include the agreed efficiency savings to the 2016 budgets in accordance with the guidance issued by the Finance Departments.
6. The Council approved the 2016 Business Plans with budgets of €14,782,911 (£10,348,038) for Foras na Gaeilge and £2,342,933 (€3,347,048) for the Ulster-Scots Agency.

APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS TO THE NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY

7. Ministers approved the appointments of Ms Rosie Ní Laoghaire and Mr Conor McGuinness to the Board of the North South Language Body until 12 December 2016, and that existing Board Member, Mr Marcas MacRuairí shall be Vice Chairperson of the North South Language Body until his term of appointment ends on 12 December 2016.

EU FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

8. The Council noted that both Agencies of the Language Body are continuing to engage in identification of possible opportunities to maximise the benefits of EU funding:-

Ulster-Scots Agency

- currently in discussion with Monaghan County Council about participating in a bid to secure PEACE Programme resources to develop a “Peace Campus” at a site in Monaghan town;
- working with a range of partners to establish a network, which has a working title of “Les Langues Mal Aimee” (The Badly Loved Languages), that will involve participation from a number of French minority language

interests (Gallo, Poitevin-Saintongeais and Alsacien) and also from the Upper Silesian minority in Poland;

- progressing opportunities under the European Routes in Industrial Heritage Network (ERIH), which has over 200 members in 43 countries and was established with funds from the EU Culture Programme and focuses on the promotion of industrial heritage; and
- monitoring progress with the development of the LEADER/Rural Development Programme for opportunities for Ulster-Scots.

Foras na Gaeilge

- implementing the literary project 'Other Words' under the Creative Europe programme. This is a 4-year programme to promote writing in minority languages,
- Foras na Gaeilge is also considering the following possible projects:-
 - Slí Cholmcille | St Columba Heritage Trail: This is a joint application between Derry City and Strabane District Council, (the Lead partner), Foras na Gaeilge, Argyll and Bute Council, and a number of European partners under the Atlantic Area Programme of the EU for a project entitled "European Connected Cultural Caminos";
 - A potential consortium bid under Horizon 2020 for a language-planning research project, involving partners in Scotland (Scots Gaelic), Norway and Finland; and
 - The Lead Organisations EU Funding Working Group is also exploring funding opportunities for partnership projects.

9. Collaboration between agencies and officials in both jurisdictions continues to maximise drawdown of EU funding and to continue to seek new opportunities for potential projects which can attract such EU funding.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

10. The Council noted that the 2014 consolidated Language Body Annual Report and Accounts (attached) were laid in the Houses of the Oireachtas and in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 23 June 2016 and the field audits for the 2015 accounts have commenced in both Agencies.

CEO RECRUITMENT PROCESS

11. Ministers noted the process for the recruitment of the Chief Executive Officer for Foras na Gaeilge subject to already established Finance and NSMC procedures. In the event that a suitable candidate is not in post before 19 September 2016, Ministers approved the interim arrangements that will be put in place to manage the business of the agency.

OTHER MATTERS

INTERTRADEIRELAND BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2016

12. Ministers noted that both Finance and Sponsor Department Ministers had already approved InterTradeIreland Business Plan and Budget/Grant.
13. The Council approved InterTradeIreland's Business Plan 2016 and the budget/grant provision for 2016 is £8,426,160/€12,037,371 and £41,000 to be drawn from Northern Ireland funding relating to 2015 accrued expenditure.

RENEWAL OF FRAMEWORK FOR PROCESSING LOUGHS AGENCY EMERGENCY REGULATIONS

14. NSMC approved the continuation of the Framework designed to support the Loughs Agency in dealing with emergencies such as a serious pollution incident for a further period of one year with effect from 20 July 2016. Ministers agreed to review the operation of this procedure, including its possible renewal, based on a report from the Loughs Agency and the Sponsor Departments, before 20 July 2017.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15. The Council agreed to meet again in Language Body sectoral format in autumn 2016.

Joint Secretariat

24 June 2016

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