

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC TRAN 1 (16) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TRANSPORT MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

12 DECEMBER 2016

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. A North South Ministerial Council Transport meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh, on 12 December 2016. The meeting was attended by Shane Ross TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Chris Hazzard, MLA, Minister for Infrastructure and Alastair Ross MLA, Executive Office Junior Minister. Minister Shane Ross chaired the meeting.

IMPLICATIONS OF UK REFERENDUM

2. The Council noted the potential implications of the UK Referendum and that each jurisdiction is continuing to deepen its analysis on the matter.
3. Ministers welcomed the ongoing liaison between officials in order to reach a common understanding of the transport implications, which will also involve transport stakeholders.

UPDATE ON EU FUNDING

4. The Council welcomed the continued co-operation between the Department for Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department for Infrastructure on EU related Transport issues and noted that since the last meeting both jurisdictions have been successful in securing Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)/Trans European Transport Network (TEN-T) co-financing.
5. Ministers noted the position with regard to the CEF/TEN-T programmes and acknowledged support for the possible projects, including:
 - Rail track upgrading and refurbishment on Belfast to Dublin Line;
 - Remediation and enabling works (Phase 1) Belfast Great Victoria Station;
 - Feasibility and design studies – Newry Southern Relief Road;
 - Road safety and design studies – A1;
 - A number of Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) applications ;and
 - possible Motorways of the Sea and Innovation application.
6. The NSMC agreed the co-operation statement template for CEF transport related projects that will be used for future endorsement by Transport Ministers.
7. Ministers signed a co-operation statement relating to candidate CEF/TEN-T projects in both jurisdictions.
8. Ministers also noted the position with regard to the INTERREG programmes including the allocation of €47m to support a range of sustainable transport projects.

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PRIORITIES INCLUDING MAJOR ROAD PROJECTS

9. The Council noted the continued co-operation between the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department for Infrastructure on Strategic Transport Priorities and opportunities for cooperation in the following areas:-
 - developing the strategic road network;
 - enhancing East West and North South connections on the island; and
 - supporting modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport, particularly the potential for shared cross border public transport services in border areas.
10. Ministers also noted the proposal to commission a feasibility study into long-term options to enhance the Enterprise service.

11. Ministers noted the Public Inquiry into the A5 road scheme opened on 4 October 2016 with hearings scheduled to finish in mid December. The Inspectors' report is expected around May 2017.
12. The Council noted the continued commitment of the Government and the Executive to the A5 scheme and noted the Irish Government's reaffirmed commitment to provide £75 million to phase 1 of the scheme which will be provided in three tranches of £25 million in the years 2017, 2018 and 2019. Ministers also noted that as in the Fresh Start Agreement, the Capital Plan states that there will be ongoing review of the scope for building on the current commitment to the A5 road project.
13. Ministers noted the proposed further engagement with key stakeholders to identify a preferred option for the Narrow Water Bridge; and noted that the Stage 1 assessment to confirm the preferred corridor(s) for the Newry Southern Relief Road (NSRR) is expected to be complete in early 2017.

CYCLING/CROSS-BORDER GREENWAYS

14. Ministers welcomed the continued investment by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department for Infrastructure on the promotion and development of sustainable transport options, including cycling.
15. The NSMC also welcomed the Department for Infrastructure publication of '*Exercise – Explore – Enjoy: a Strategic Plan for Greenways*' and welcomed EU funding awards for three cross-border Greenway projects through INTERREG V, recognising the benefits of collaboration in developing Greenway networks.

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 and noted that mutual recognition of driving disqualifications between the two jurisdictions is expected to recommence early in 2017.
17. Ministers noted the considerable difficulties being encountered in relation to the Mutual Recognition of Penalty Points project.
18. The NSMC noted the legislative passage of the Northern Ireland Road Traffic (Amendment) Act that includes provisions to tackle drink driving and to reform the learner and restricted driver regime, Graduated Driver Licensing and mandatory wearing of helmets when riding a quad bike on public roads.
19. Ministers noted the continuing 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 both jurisdictions.
20. Ministers also welcomed plans for cross border enforcement "*Operation Trivium*" (which will take place over 7 days on the run up to Christmas and

focus on targeting higher risk transport operators) and welcomed the continued exchange between enforcement officers.

21. Ministers agreed on the need for increased care, vigilance and responsibility on our roads over the Christmas period, especially amongst young drivers.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS OF THE NORTH SOUTH IMPLEMENTATION BODIES

22. The Council approved the appointment of Board Members to the North South Implementation Bodies.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

23. The Council agreed to hold its next NSMC Transport meeting in March/April 2017.

**Joint Secretariat
12 December 2016**

Website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org