

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC LAN 3 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

12 DECEMBER 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The sixteenth North South Ministerial Council Language Body meeting was held in Armagh on 12 December 2012. The meeting was attended by 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, Carál Ní Chuilín, MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA. Minister of State McGinley chaired the meeting.
2. The meeting dealt with issues relating to the Language Body and its two constituent Agencies, Tha Boord o Ulstèr Scotch (the Ulster-Scots Agency) and Foras na Gaeilge (the Irish Language Agency).

OPENING REMARKS

3. Recognising that there is a need for change in the sector, Ministers discussed Foras na Gaeilge's review of core funding which will be the focus of the next Language Sector Meeting in 2013.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY PROGRESS REPORT

4. The Council noted progress reports from the Chairpersons and the Chief Executive Officers of the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge which included the following achievements:

Ulster-Scots Agency

- Advancement of the Ulster-Scots flagship programme for primary schools, including agreement with schools on participation and organisation of an inaugural teachers' conference;
- Delivery of 16 seminars to raise awareness of Agency funded programmes in regard to festival funding, summer schools and music/dance tuition;
- Establishment of the Ulster-Scots Language Forum with representation from language groups, the Ministerial Advisory Group on Ulster-Scots (MAGUS), the University of Ulster and BBC Northern Ireland; and
- Completion of the strategic review of the Community Workers Scheme.

Foras na Gaeilge

- Funding for the provision of specialised courses for the public service with over 1,200 participants attending night classes and over 2,200 participating in online learning;
- Promotion of the language amongst young people through funding of almost €500,000 for 66 summer camps and 77 youth events;
- Further development of the terminology database with the addition of 1,460 new terms and the revision of 120 existing terms; and
- Promotion of the use of Irish in a business context in the small and medium enterprise sector with match-funding support provided to 125 businesses.

5. Ministers also noted the ongoing collaboration between the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge in regard to governance issues and promotion of the work of the Language Body, including revision of the Equality Scheme, participation in joint showcase events and in sponsorship of a book in Irish about Robbie Burns

BUSINESS PLANS AND BUDGETS 2012

6. The Council noted that Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency have applied the efficiency savings to the 2012 budgets in accordance with the guidance issued by the Finance Departments and that the 2012 Business Plans and Budgets will be brought to a future NSMC meeting for approval as soon as possible.

ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

7. Ministers noted that the 2008 and 2009 consolidated Language Body report and accounts were laid in the Assembly and in the Houses of the Oireachtas on 11 July 2012 and on 7 December 2012 respectively. The Council also directed Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency to include, as a key priority in their 2013 business plans, the publication of the Language Body accounts for 2010, 2011 and 2012.

BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2013

8. The Council noted that draft 2013 Business Plans for Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency have been prepared with the focus on delivery of key priorities for each Agency. Sponsor Departments will work together to finalise the 2013 Business Plans and Budgets and, following approval by Sponsor and Finance Ministers, will bring them forward for approval at a future NSMC meeting.

ULSTER-SCOTS AGENCY HAIRTLAN PROJECT

9. Ministers noted a presentation by the CEO of the Ulster-Scots Agency, outlining the work being undertaken by the Agency and other stakeholders to progress the Hairtlan initiative. This entails the establishment of a Hairtlan Advisory Panel and the development of a funding stream to support the project. The Council also noted the timetable for launching the scheme in 2013 in order to enable programme delivery to begin in 2014.

FORAS NA GAEILGE – OFFICIAL STANDARD FOR IRISH

10. Ministers noted the provisions of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Bill 2012 with regard to the publication and periodic review of the Official Standard for Irish. This is to be used in translating all primary and secondary legislation in the Oireachtas and as the guide for writing in the Irish language. Foras na Gaeilge will also take appropriate action, as required, to adhere to the Official Standard for Irish in carrying out its functions with regard to terminology and publications.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11. The Council agreed to consider a suitable date for the next Language Body meeting.

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