

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC TOU 2 (15) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TOURISM MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

2 DECEMBER 2015

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The seventeenth North South Ministerial Council Tourism meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on 2 December 2015. The meeting was attended by Jonathan Bell MLA, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Carál Ní Chuilín, MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure and Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport. Minister Bell chaired the meeting.

EU MATTERS/FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

2. Ministers noted the current position regarding the EU Funding Programmes which may be of assistance to the tourism sector and agreed that the relevant tourism stakeholders in both jurisdictions will continue to closely monitor developments at EU level to ensure that tourism may benefit from all suitable collaborative funding opportunities.

PROGRESS REPORT

3. The Chairperson, Mr Brian Ambrose informed Ministers of the work of the Tourism Ireland Board since the previous meeting including delivering the 2015 Business Plan and developing the 2016 Business Plan, as well as the progress on implementing the Corporate Plan 2014 – 2016.
4. Ministers also learnt of the progress with regard to delivering Tourism Ireland's performance goals for 2015 and development of the 2016 performance goals.

REVIEW OF 2015 SEASON/LOOK AHEAD TO QUARTER 1 2016

5. Ministers received a presentation from the CEO Mr Niall Gibbons on Tourism Ireland's performance throughout 2015. This contained highlights of tourism Ireland's marketing campaign throughout the year, in particular:
 - Wild Atlantic Way and Causeway Coastal Route
 - Global Greening
 - Game of Thrones
 - Irish Open
 - British-Irish Visa Scheme
 - Overseas publicity
6. Ministers received a performance overview of the 2015 season and were informed of emerging promotional themes for 2016, in particular:
 - Ireland's Ancient East
 - Northern Ireland's Year of Food and Drink 2016
 - Wild Atlantic Way and Causeway Coastal Route
 - Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air; and
7. The NSMC welcomed the strong growth in visit numbers from all main markets to Ireland and Northern Ireland.
8. Ministers noted the current position of the 2016 Business Plan and the intention to bring it for NSMC approval at the next available NSMC meeting.

TOURISM STATISTICS

9. The joint work undertaken to develop a compendium report on tourism statistics was noted. The study is expected to be finalised shortly and a detailed report will be made to Ministers at their next meeting.

'ALL ISLAND CRUISE TOURISM STRATEGY'

10. Ministers noted that work is progressing on the preparation of an 'All Island Cruise Tourism Strategy' in consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders and that it should be completed early in 2016.

RUGBY WORLD CUP UPDATE- 2017/2023

11. The NSMC noted ongoing work by relevant Departments in Ireland and Northern Ireland to host the Rugby World Cup (RWC) in 2023 and preparations in hand in both jurisdictions to host the Women's Rugby World Cup in Belfast and Dublin in August 2017.

2014 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

12. The NSMC noted Tourism Ireland's Annual Report and Accounts 2014.

WATERWAYS IRELAND PROPERTY DISPOSALS

13. The NSMC consented to the grant of right of way over Royal Canal Towpath at Kilbrook, Co Kildare to Cathal Fitzsimmons, deed of transfer and grant of right of way between Waterways Ireland and Bord Na Móna Energy Ltd for lands at Begnagh, Co Longford. Ministers also consented to the transfer of lands to Waterways Ireland and a 20 year licence to Longford County Council to facilitate the development of the shared pedestrian and cycle route along the Royal Canal from the junction of the Longford Branch at Cloonsheerin to the Westmeath County boundary at Cloonbrin for a distance of 28.2km.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14. The Council agreed to meet again in Tourism format in spring 2016.

Joint Secretariat

2 December 2015

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