

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AQUACULTURE & MARINE MEETING

**FOYLE, CARLINGFORD & IRISH LIGHTS
COMMISSION (FCILC)**

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH AND BY VIDEOCONFERENCE**

21 OCTOBER 2020

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The thirtieth North South Ministerial Council Aquaculture and Marine meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh and by videoconference on 21 October 2020. The meeting was attended by Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Edwin Poots MLA, Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, and Nichola Mallon MLA, Minister for Infrastructure. Minister Ryan chaired the meeting.

PROGRESS REPORT

2. Ministers welcomed the report on the activities of the Loughs Agency including the ongoing conservation and protection efforts, and noted in particular the Loughs Agency's response to Covid-19; the Loughs Agency's Strategic Direction for a New Decade 2020-30; the collaborative work in delivery of a number of conservation, angling and marine tourism development projects; and the success of the Foyle and Carlingford Ambassador Programme. The Council

also welcomed the Loughs Agency's continued investment in its scientific fisheries monitoring programme.

IMPLICATIONS OF UK WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EU

3. The Council agreed that the Loughs Agency, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications will continue to work together to consider the impact of the UK withdrawal from the EU.
4. Ministers agreed this matter will be kept under review at future NSMC meetings in this sector.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

5. The Council approved the Loughs Agency 2020 Business Plan and recommended the 2020 Budget/Grant provision of £5.475/€6.083 million, which has been completed in accordance with agreed guidance issued by the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and has been agreed by Sponsor Departments and Finance Ministers.
6. The Council approved the Loughs Agency Business Plans and Budgets/Grants for 2017, 2018 and 2019 which have been completed in accordance with agreed guidance issued by the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and have been agreed by Sponsor Departments and Finance Ministers.
7. The Council approved the Loughs Agency 2017-2019 Corporate Plan and Corporate Plan 2020-2022 which have been completed in accordance with agreed guidance issued by the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and have been agreed by Sponsor Departments and Finance Ministers.
8. The Council noted the Loughs Agency Annual Reports and Accounts for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018, which have been laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly and both Houses of the Oireachtas.

RENEWAL OF FRAMEWORK FOR PROCESSING LOUGHS AGENCY EMERGENCY REGULATIONS

9. The Council approved the continuation of the Framework designed to support the Loughs Agency in dealing with emergencies such as a serious pollution incident for a period of one year with effect from 21 October 2020.
10. 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 October 2021.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

11. The Council noted that the Loughs Agency, with the support of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and the Department of the Environment, Climate, and Communications is undertaking a competitive recruitment process for the post of Chief Executive of the Agency.
12. The Council noted that the Sponsor Departments are shortly to seek approval from the Finance Departments for the recruitment process and the terms and conditions of the post.
13. The Council noted that the recruitment process will be managed by the Public Appointments Service (PAS) as agreed with the Sponsor Departments.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14. The Council agreed to hold its next Aquaculture and Marine meeting early in 2021.

Joint Secretariat
21 October 2020

Website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org