

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TOURISM MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH, AND BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

25 NOVEMBER 2020

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The eighteenth North South Ministerial Council Tourism meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh, and by videoconference on 25 November 2020. The meeting was attended by Catherine Martin TD, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Diane Dodds MLA, Minister for the Economy, and Conor Murphy MLA, Minister of Finance. Minister Martin chaired the meeting.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19

2. The Council noted the efforts made to deal with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Tourism Sector and acknowledged the importance of continued cooperation across both jurisdictions to address the impact of Covid-19 as the sector begins to recover.

IMPLICATIONS OF UK WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EU

3. Ministers noted activity undertaken by Tourism Ireland to prepare for the UK withdrawal from the EU and noted that the Department for the Economy and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media will continue to support Tourism Ireland in this regard.

TOURISM IRELAND PROGRESS REPORT

4. The Council received a report from the Chairperson of Tourism Ireland on the work of the Board since the last NSMC Tourism meeting. This outlined the work of the Board in developing, approving and monitoring the Business Plans for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 and the Corporate Plans 2017–2019 and 2020-2022.
5. Ministers also noted the progress made in delivering Tourism Ireland's performance goals from 2016 to February 2020 and Tourism Ireland's activity during the Covid-19 pandemic since March 2020.
6. The NSMC noted the progress made in developing the Covid-19 Recovery Planning Framework – Restart, Rebuild, Redesign – to support the recovery of the tourism industry from the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

7. The Council approved Tourism Ireland's Business Plans and Budgets/Grants for 2017, 2018 and 2019, and Tourism Ireland's 2017-2019 Corporate Plan, which have been agreed by Sponsor Departments and Finance Ministers.
8. Ministers noted that Tourism Ireland's Business Plan for 2020, including the Budget/Grant provision, has been completed and submitted to Sponsor Departments and will be brought to a future NSMC meeting for approval.
9. The NSMC noted that Tourism Ireland has prepared an addendum to the 2020 Business Plan to guide its operations in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.
10. The Council noted that the Tourism Ireland 2020-22 Corporate Plan has been approved at Board level but is currently being reviewed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and an amended Plan will be brought to a future NSMC meeting for approval.
11. The Council noted the Annual Reports and Accounts for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 which have been laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly and both Houses of the Oireachtas.

12. Ministers noted that on 17 December 2019 the Tourism Ireland Board approved the granting of a general Power of Attorney as a short-term measure until further Board Directors were appointed by the NSMC, and that this Power of Attorney remained effective until the Board meeting of 25 March 2020.

STAFFING AND ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

13. The Council noted the continuation of the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Ireland and also noted recent developments with regard to Tourism Ireland's staffing complement and that officials will take forward discussions on this and report back to a future meeting.

REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME

14. The NSMC agreed that officials from the Department for the Economy and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media will review the existing work programme in the NSMC Tourism Sector and report back on priorities identified to the next meeting of the Council in this sector.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15. The Council agreed to hold its next Tourism meeting in early 2021.

**Joint Secretariat
25 November 2020**

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