

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC FCIL 1 (16) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AQUACULTURE & MARINE MEETING

FOYLE, CARLINGFORD & IRISH LIGHTS COMMISSION (FCILC)

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

14 SEPTEMBER 2016

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty-ninth North South Ministerial Council Aquaculture and Marine meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 14 September 2016. The meeting was attended by Denis Naughten TD, Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Michelle McIlveen MLA, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Seán Kyne TD, Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs and Natural Resources and Chris Hazzard MLA, Minister for Infrastructure. Minister McIlveen chaired the meeting.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE UK REFERENDUM

2. The Council noted that the Loughs Agency, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment had undertaken an initial

scoping exercise to consider the impact of the result of the UK Referendum to leave the EU.

3. The Ministers noted that the process of exiting the EU is still at an early stage and agreed that this matter will be kept under review at future NSMC meetings in this sector.

OVERVIEW OF THE LOUGHS AGENCY

4. The Council welcomed a presentation from the Loughs Agency which outlined its Work Programme.
5. Ministers noted that the key objectives of the Agency are to conserve and protect fisheries, license and develop aquaculture and shellfisheries, develop Marine Tourism and Angling; and effectively and efficiently deliver on its statutory mandate and responsibilities.

PROGRESS REPORT

6. The Council welcomed the CEO's Report on the activities of the Loughs Agency, including its ongoing conservation and protection efforts and the Agency's participation on the North/South Fisheries Liaison Group.
7. In particular, the Council noted the Agency's nominations for tourism and visitor attraction awards; the progress made on the Draft Corporate Plan 2017-19 and Draft Business Plan 2017; the outcome of the Internal Audit; the update on the survival of the Native Lough Foyle Flat Oyster; and the loss of the Agency's survey vessel, the MMV Ostrea.
8. Ministers welcomed the Lough's Agency role in facilitating discussions with interested parties and undertaking a feasibility study which led to the resumption of the Foyle Ferry Service from July of this year.

MARKETING THE LOUGHS' RESOURCES

9. Ministers welcomed a report from the Loughs Agency on its activities to promote and market the Foyle and Carlingford Areas.
10. In particular, the Council noted the angling development initiatives such as events, competitions and promotional editorial coverage in prestigious angling publications. Ministers also welcomed the marine tourism initiatives, including the Foyle Maritime Festival and The Ark; and the various education and outreach activities, including the Maritime Ambassador Programme and the Foyle Ambassador Project.

EXTERNAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

11. The Council considered a Paper on the various external funding opportunities which the Loughs Agency is exploring.
12. Ministers noted the Loughs Agency's success to date in securing external funding.
13. The Agency's plans to avail of future funding initiatives, including the European Social Fund, Heritage Lottery, INTERREG V and the Rural Development Programme, for the benefit of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas were also discussed.

ANNUAL REPORT AND DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015

14. The NSMC noted the Loughs Agency's Annual Report and Draft Financial Statements for 2015. Following certification of the Financial Statements by the Comptrollers and Auditors General, these will be laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly and both Houses of the Oireachtas.

THE CARLINGFORD AREA (DEFINITION OF THE MOUTH OF THE CLANRYE RIVER) REGULATIONS 2016

15. The Council considered and approved The Carlingford Area (Definition of the Mouth of the Clanrye River) Regulations 2016; and authorised the Joint Secretaries to the North South Ministerial Council to signify approval on its behalf.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16. The Council agreed to hold its next Aquaculture and Marine meeting in Spring 2017.

**Joint Secretariat
14 September 2016**

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