

North South Ministerial Council  
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta  
Thuaidh Theas  
An Chomhrúnaíocht

**PAPER NSMC TOU 1 (14) JC**

**NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

**TOURISM MEETING**

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,  
ARMAGH**

**22 JANUARY 2014**

**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. The fifteenth North South Ministerial Council Tourism meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on 22 January 2014. The meeting was attended by Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Arlene Foster MLA, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, and Carál Ní Chuilín, MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure . Minister Foster chaired the meeting.

**OPENING REMARKS**

2. It was noted that a major review of tourism policy is currently underway in Ireland and that a review of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and wider structures is also underway. Co-operation on a possible joint 2023 Rugby World Cup bid was welcomed.

**SECTORAL PRIORITIES**

3. Ministers had a discussion on various priorities for the tourism sector and noted that these will be contained in a report to be considered at a future NSMC Institutional meeting as part of the ongoing review into sectoral priorities.

## **PROGRESS REPORT AND REVIEW OF 2013 SEASON**

4. The Chairperson, Mr. Brian Ambrose, and the CEO, Mr. Niall Gibbons, updated Ministers on the work of the Tourism Ireland Board including implementation of the 2013 Business Plan and the development of the Corporate Plan 2014-2016. They also reviewed progress with regard to Tourism Ireland's SMART Objective Performance Goals for 2013 in relation to:
  - growing visitor numbers to Ireland and Northern Ireland;
  - maximizing tourism benefits of The Gathering 2013 and Derry~Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013;
  - improving competitive interest ranking in source overseas markets and
  - Improving organizational efficiency.
5. Ministers were updated on the various Board meetings that have taken place since the last NSMC meeting. The most recent board meeting had been held during December at Crumlin Road Gaol, Belfast; members of the Boards of both Tourism Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board met with the senior executives of both organisations onboard the SS Nomadic to discuss matters of interest and areas for collaboration relating to tourism in NI. A joint presentation on the forthcoming Giro d'Italia was made by members of the Tourism Ireland and Northern Ireland Tourist Board management teams.
6. The Council noted the marketing campaign highlights for 2013 in particular the worldwide campaigns for The Gathering Ireland 2013 and the UK City of Culture 2013. In 2014 Tourism Ireland will leverage; the Wild Atlantic Way, the launch of Giro d'Italia 2014 and Limerick City of Culture 2014 as 'new news' and will continue to optimize and grow prominence for Titanic Belfast and The Giants Causeway as key visitor attractions.

## **BUSINESS PLAN 2014 AND 2014-2016 CORPORATE PLAN**

7. Ministers approved Tourism Ireland's Corporate Plan for the period 2014-2016 and noted that Tourism Ireland aims to continue to deliver on increasing tourism to the island of Ireland and supporting Northern Ireland to realise its tourism potential.
8. In approving Tourism Ireland's Business Plan 2014 Ministers recommended the budget provision for 2014 of €58.029/£49.905m.

## **REAPPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

9. Ministers approved the re-appointment of Niall Gibbons as the Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Ireland, subject to the new contract being agreed with Finance Departments.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

10. The Council agreed to meet again in Tourism format in Autumn 2014.

**Joint Secretariat**

**22 January 2014**

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