

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC LAN 1 (15) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY MEETING

ULSTER-SCOTS AGENCY OFFICE, BELFAST

10 JUNE 2015

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty-fourth North South Ministerial Council Language Body meeting was held in the Ulster Scots Agency, Headquarters, Belfast on 10 June 2015. The meeting was attended by Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, and OFMDFM Junior Minister Michelle McIlveen MLA, Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Joe McHugh TD, Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs. Minister Ní Chuilín chaired the meeting.

PROGRESS REPORT

2. Ministers noted progress reports from the Chairpersons and the Chief Executive Officers of Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency which include the following achievements relating to the period from November 2014 to May 2015:

Foras na Gaeilge:

- continuing progress on the new funding arrangements, including 12 meetings to date of the Partnership Forum and 3 meetings to date of the

Language Development Forum; the recruitment of staff and the establishment of offices by the 6 lead organisations in Belfast, Newry, Dublin, Ráth Chairn, Athenry, Casla, and Dungarvan;

- success in securing European funding under the Creative Europe Programme, in partnership with four other organisations, to foster creative writing in minority languages;
- further progress with the new English-Irish Dictionary and design of the 'App' specification which will be available for the academic year beginning in September 2015; and
- publication of new guidelines for best practice in serving the Irish language community were issued to the new super councils at a conference held in Armagh on 25 March 2015.

Ulster-Scots Agency:

- organisation of the Burns Night Concert, in partnership with the Ulster Orchestra, in the Belfast Waterfront Hall in January which was subsequently broadcast on BBC 2;
- launch of the new Ulster-Scots web portal for visitors, www.discoverulsterscots.com, which includes an ever expanding range of visitor attractions, including Bushmills Distillery, First Derry Presbyterian Church and St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast;
- the new Ulster-Scots gallery at North Down Museum, Bangor, funded by the Agency, opened on 14th May 2015; and
- funding provided for delivery of Ulster-Scots music and dance tuition in 42 primary schools, in addition, to delivery of 24 Ulster-Scots after school clubs and 11 Ulster-Scots school workshops.

Ministers also noted progress on collaboration between Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency, including:-

- the Safeguarding Policy and Code of Practice for funded bodies has been reviewed and updated by external advisors; and
- under the joint project for Integrated Schools, 6 workshops were delivered to Priory Integrated College, Holywood during November-December 2014, providing 25 Year 8 students with an insight into the Irish language and Ulster-Scots culture and language. The rollout of the programme continued with Shimna Integrated College, Ballymena in May-June 2015 and plans are underway in regard to other schools.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

3. The Council noted that the 2013 consolidated Language Body Annual Report and Accounts were laid in the Houses of the Oireachtas and in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 5 June 2015.
4. The Council also noted that the field audits in regard to the 2014 accounts have been completed for the Ulster-Scots Agency and will commence for Foras na Gaeilge in June / July 2015.

EU FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

5. Ministers noted that the Agencies of the Language Body are continuing to engage in identification of possible opportunities to maximise the benefits of EU funding.
6. The Council noted the Ulster-Scots Agency's exploratory discussions with a number of interested parties in relation to the potential for a project relating to entrepreneurship with young people in isolated communities under the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme. Possible partners include Mourne and East Donegal, linking with the Scottish Highlands and Norway. The Agency is liaising with the Transnational/Interregional Programmes Regional Contact Point at the SEUPB regarding potential funding for the project.
7. Ministers noted Foras na Gaeilge's success in securing EU funding under the Creative Europe Programme for a literary project entitled *Other Words*, in co-operation with Spain, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Sweden. The project, which will be launched in July, will raise the profile of minority language literature throughout Europe, both in the original languages and in translation.
8. The Council welcomed the fact that collaboration between agencies and officials in both jurisdictions can continue to maximise drawdown of EU funding and encouraged officials to continue to seek new opportunities for potential projects which can attract such EU funding.

ULSTER-SCOTS AGENCY COMMUNITY IMPACT PROGRAMME

9. Ian Crozier, the CEO of the Ulster-Scots Agency, delivered a short presentation outlining the work being progressed by the Agency in building capacity and supporting community development through its Community Impact Programme. The programme involves supporting a small number of full-time development posts in an effort to provide more targeted and sustained support to community groups.

FORAS NA GAEILGE - DICTIONARY PROJECT

10. The Council approved, within the existing budget, a revised timetable for the English/Irish dictionary project to ensure provision of a more comprehensive end product, including a choice of print, online and app formats.
11. The Council noted the updated targets, comprising publication of 120,000 sense units in 2015, publication of a further 10,000 sense units in 2016, with particular emphasis on the primary and secondary curricula in both jurisdictions, and publication of the print version of the dictionary for the start of the academic year in 2017.

NEXT MEETING

12. The Council agreed to meet again in Language Body sectoral format in November 2015.

Joint Secretariat

10 June 2015

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