



The period covered by this report (April 2020 – March 2021) reflects a time during which we all experienced the significant and unforeseen impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. In response, the Council's members developed innovative and timely policy approaches to the wide range of challenges posed by the pandemic, and the Council provided an instrumental forum to share experiences and learnings in real time to inform these responses.

Responding to this context, the Secretariat supported the Council to develop effective alternative ways of working to ensure the continuation of the Council's activity, with the totality of engagements (including Summits, Ministerial meetings, official level meetings and other events) taking place virtually during this period.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, the Council agreed to postpone its Summit meeting planned for June 2020. The Council met instead at Summit level later that year in November, hosted by the Scottish Government. This was the first time in the Council's history that it met virtually, with Heads of Administration collectively considering responses to the impact of, and recovery from, the pandemic. The Council welcomed the participation of the First and deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive at this Summit for the first time since the re-constitution of the Executive in January 2020.

The Secretariat also supported the Council to meet at Ministerial level virtually four times during this period. Environment Ministers met in November 2020, considering approaches to the protection of the marine environment and to climate adaptation. Concluding the collaboration between the Housing and Collaborative Spatial Planning (CSP) work sectors of the Council, the Northern Ireland Executive hosted a Joint Housing-CSP Ministerial meeting in February 2021, culminating in the publication of a policy guide for housing and planning approaches to ageing populations

across the BIC administrations. Ministers also met in March 2021 to share approaches and experiences in the policy areas of Drugs and Alcohol and of Digital Inclusion, hosted by the Governments of Ireland and Isle of Man respectively.

Further, a symposium on Climate Adaptation, hosted by the Government of Ireland in October 2020, facilitated the Council's members to share experiences in developing climate resilient infrastructure. Building on the success of this virtual event, the Secretariat is supporting a number of the Council's work sectors to deliver future similar events, ensuring continued collaboration and lesson sharing remains a key feature of the Council's activity. The Secretariat has also played a key role in the Council's development of effective communications initiatives, including campaigns to promote online safety and virtual learning, during a period in which people spent more time online than ever.

As the BIC's Member Administrations look towards recovery, the Secretariat is committed to continuing to support the work of the Council, taking account of emerging trends and agile ways of working, while also ensuring that the Council continues to provide a useful forum for engagement for its members as they seek to embed policy responses to the longer-term impacts of, and recovery from, the Covid-19 pandemic.



BIC Secretariat Joint Heads - Ciara Gilvarry (l) and William Wickman (r)



Summit hosted by the Scottish Government, 06 November 2020

Due to the unprecedented circumstances brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the associated impact on all eight of the Council's Member Administrations, it was agreed to postpone the 34th BIC Summit, due to be hosted by the Scottish Government in June 2020. In November 2020, this Summit took place virtually, hosted by the Scottish Government, with Heads of Administration welcomed by the Right Honourable Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister of Scotland.

Economic Recovery from Covid-19

The Council discussed the impact of Covid-19 upon the economies of Member Administrations, reflecting the significant and potentially long-lasting social impacts of the pandemic. Heads of Administration also discussed the vision, priorities and opportunities to drive economic recovery, and discussed areas of coherence across Member Administrations.

the participation of the Northern Ireland Executive First Minister and deputy First Minister. Ministers took the opportunity to discuss the latest political developments across their administrations, and updated the Council on activity in relation to the UK's exit from the European Union.

BIC Secretariat

The Council approved the Secretariat's 2019/20 End of Year and 2020/21 Mid-Year Reports and welcomed the publication of the Council's Annual Report for 2019/20. The Council confirmed the Secretariat would retain the same budget for the financial year 2020/21.

Latest Political Developments

The Council reflected that since they had last met at a Summit of the BIC in Dublin in 2019, the Northern Ireland Executive had been restored, and welcomed



Family photograph of Ministers at the 34th British-Irish Council Summit hosted virtually by the Scottish Government

Environment

hosted by the UK Government – virtually, 04 November 2020

The BIC Environment work sector held its 16th Ministerial meeting on Wednesday 04 November 2020, hosted by the UK Government. The meeting was chaired by Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the UK Government’s Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The Irish Government was represented by Mr Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications and Minister for Transport. The Scottish Government was represented by Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform and Mairi Gougeon MSP, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment.

The Welsh Government was represented by Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs. The Isle of Man Government was represented by Hon Geoffrey Boot MHK, Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture. The Government of Jersey was represented by Deputy John Young, Minister for the Environment. The Government of Guernsey was represented by Deputy Lindsay De Sausmarez, President of the Committee for the Environment and Infrastructure. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Edwin Poots MLA, Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and Declan Kearney MLA, Junior Minister in The Executive Office.



Family photograph of BIC Environment Ministerial meeting, 04 November 2020



Ministers considered three discussion papers that reflected the work undertaken by the eight Member Administrations via the Environment work sector and its subgroups, including a combined paper on ‘Marine Environment and Marine Litter’, a paper on ‘Climate Change Adaptation’ and a paper outlining the work undertaken to address ‘Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)’ across the BIC administrations.

Marine Environment and Marine Litter

Ministers re-affirmed their commitment to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources in accordance with UN Sustainable Development Goal 14. The BIC Environment work sector has established two subgroups to cover the areas of Marine Litter and Marine Environment, including biodiversity, marine protected areas and ocean acidification. Ministers discussed priority areas of focus of these two subgroups to date, including on commitments agreed at the BIC Marine Litter Symposium in February 2019 to develop options to support sustainable end of life fishing gear disposal, support the reduction of plastic pellet loss, and raise awareness of marine litter with young people and fishing professionals.

Noting the challenges faced by the marine environment in our shared seas, Ministers agreed to continue this collaborative work, aligned with macro-regional and international obligations.



Climate Change Adaptation

Ministers also considered key aspects of the work that is being undertaken by the BIC Climate Adaptation sub group including to share approaches and information on:

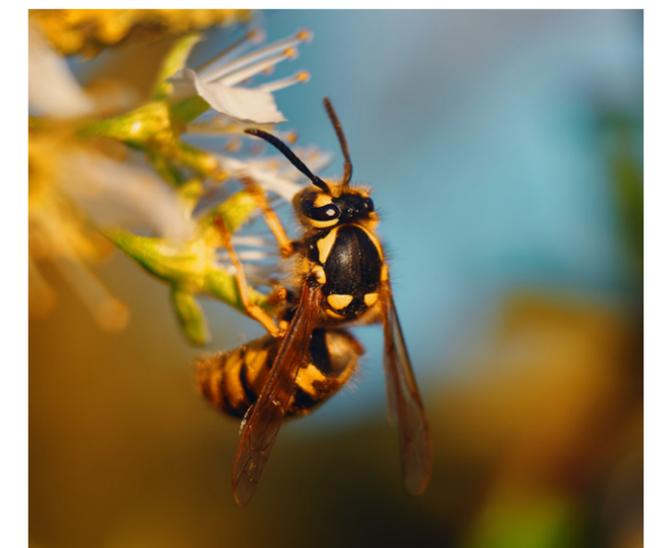
- Adaptation research and evidence, and to improve linkages between adaptation researchers;
- Measuring progress to minimise climate risks to critical infrastructure; and
- Community and private sector engagement on climate adaptation, adaptation governance models and monitoring and evaluation of adaptation.

Ministers welcomed the Climate Adaptation Symposium, which had been hosted by the Irish Government on 20 October 2020, and which focussed on critical infrastructure (see page 10 for further information).

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Ministers noted that the BIC INNS officials had been meeting bi-annually since 2013 to explore and agree areas of cooperation on INNS, and that the fourth BIC INNS workshop was held in Cardiff on 20/21 January 2020 hosted jointly by the BIC Secretariat and Welsh Government. Ministers also considered the commitments of the INNS subgroup going forward including:

- To collaborate to develop internal and cross jurisdictional INNS biosecurity protocols for the marine aquaculture industry;
- To collaborate on action to minimise the risk posed by pets, small zoos and animal rescue centres;
- To examine the feasibility of developing a central database to collate and share information on new recordings of alert species and escapes of high priority pet/zoo animals;
- To adopt a re-vamped Be Plant Wise campaign and continue the existing Check Clean Dry campaign at ports and airports;
- To continue to hold a common Invasive Species Week;
- To establish an Asian Hornet Taskforce to facilitate the sharing of good practice, research results and experience; and
- That the GB Non-native Species Secretariat will organise an impartial review to assist Northern Ireland in its eradication of Muntjac Deer.



Collaborative Spatial Planning and Housing hosted by the Northern Ireland Executive - virtually, 25 February 2021

Since 2018, the BIC Collaborative Spatial Planning (CSP) and Housing work sectors have taken the opportunity to collaborate on issues of common interest, enabling greater knowledge sharing between relevant housing and planning officials across Member Administrations.

This work culminated in a joint Ministerial meeting, hosted by the Northern Ireland Executive in February 2021, which was co-chaired by Ministers Nichola Mallon MLA, Minister for Infrastructure, and Deirdre Hargey MLA, Minister for Communities.

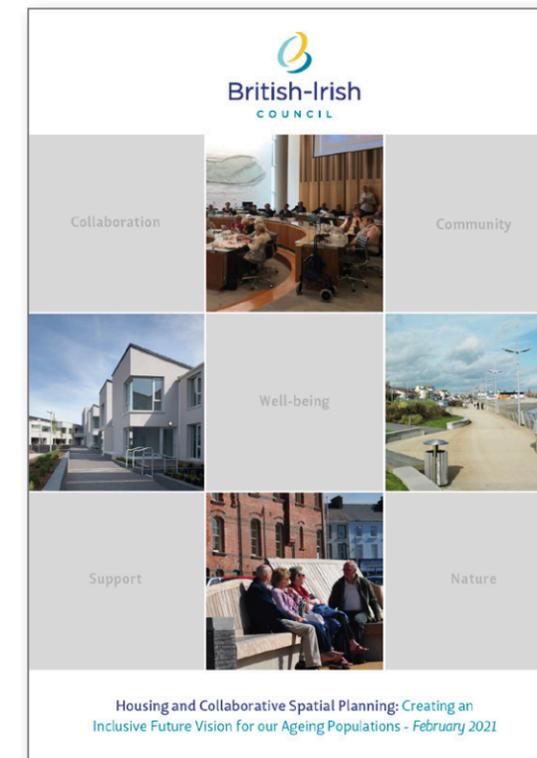
The Northern Ireland Executive was also represented by Junior Minister Gary Middleton MLA. The Government of Guernsey was represented by Deputy Victoria Oliver, President of the Development and Planning Authority.

The Government of Ireland was represented by Mr Darragh O'Brien T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Mr Peter Burke T.D., Minister of State for Local Government and Planning. The Isle of Man Government was represented by Hon Tim Baker MHK, Minister for Infrastructure, and Hon Ray Harmer MHK, Minister for Policy and Reform. The Government of Jersey was represented by Deputy John Young, Minister for the Environment, and Deputy Russell Labey, Minister for Housing and Communities. The Scottish Government was represented by Mr Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning. The UK Government was represented by Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP, Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Welsh Government was represented by Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government.



Family photograph of BIC Joint Housing-Collaborative Spatial Planning Ministerial meeting, 25 February 2021

Ministers agreed that there had been great value in the collaborative work of the Housing and CSP work sectors, and endorsed the publication of a policy guide on 'Creating an Inclusive Future Vision for our Ageing Populations', welcoming the guide as a useful tool for housing and planning officials in developing policy approaches to supporting the older population.



Link: [Creating an Inclusive Future Vision for our Ageing Populations](#)

Ministers reflected on discussion papers which highlighted the close relationships between the housing and planning sectors. The CSP discussion paper 'The Role of Planning Systems in Supporting Housing Supply' complimented the Housing discussion paper 'Demonstrating the link between Housing Provision and Urban Regeneration'. On these papers, Ministers discussed the challenges and opportunities for the housing and planning sectors, with a focus on housing supply, revitalisation and regeneration. Ministers also reviewed a Glossary of Terms prepared by the Housing work sector, which Ministers agreed was a helpful tool to facilitate further collaboration within the work sector.



Ministers also considered the future challenges for Housing and CSP policy across Member Administrations, and endorsed the future focus for the work sectors, through the lens of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Areas of future focus for the CSP work sector will include:

- The Contribution of Spatial Planning to the revitalisation of towns;
- The Contribution of Spatial Planning to 'Building Better Places' in the context of the Covid recovery; and
- Best practice in National/Regional Planning Frameworks.

Areas of future focus for the Housing work sector will include:

- The challenge of climate change and associated design issues;
- Provision of suitable affordable Housing; and
- Aspects of Housing's role in Health and Social Care.

Digital Inclusion

hosted by the Isle of Man Government – virtually, 05 March 2021



Family photograph of BIC Digital Inclusion Ministerial meeting, 05 March 2021

The BIC Digital Inclusion work sector held its second Ministerial meeting on Friday 05 March 2021, hosted virtually by the Isle of Man Government. The meeting was chaired by Hon Ray Harmer MHK, Minister for Policy and Reform in the Isle of Man Government.

The Government of Guernsey was represented by Deputy Andrea Dudley-Owen, Minister for Education, Sport and Culture. The Irish Government was represented by Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for Transport and Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications. The Government of Jersey was represented by Deputy Jeremy Maçon, Minister for Education. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Conor Murphy MLA, Minister of Finance and Diane Dodds MLA, Minister for the Economy. The Scottish Government was represented by Ivan McKee

MSP, Minister for Trade, Innovation and Public Finance. The UK Government was represented by Caroline Dinenage MP, Minister of State for Digital and Culture. The Welsh Government was represented by Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government.

Ministers reflected on two discussion papers prepared by the work sector. The first, 'Online Safety and Digital Inclusion' outlined the work under way across the eight Member Administrations in promoting and safeguarding online safety within the context of digital inclusion and digital skills. The second paper, 'The Evolution of Digital Inclusion' outlined how the work sector has developed its work to focus on online safety; the digital inclusion issues that have arisen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and how these topics will continue to inform the future work of the work sector.

Be Safe, Be Included, Be Connected

Top Tip 1. Always install the latest updates as they help to keep your device secure.

Top Tip 2. Use three random words to create a strong and memorable password. Use numbers and symbols to increase security.

Get Online - Be Safe

Top Tip 3. Take care with what you share online and think about who can see it.

Top Tip 4. Save your important information in more than one place.

Be Safe, Be Included, Be Connected

Top Tip 1. Start with basics. You don't have to be tech-savvy to get started. Ask family, friends, carers for help.

Top Tip 2. Be patient. Don't expect too much too quickly, building digital skills and confidence takes time.

Get Online - Be Included

Top Tip 3. You're in charge. Change your device settings to suit you. Increase text size, use text-to-speech or magnify your screen for easier viewing.

Top Tip 4. Check out your local library or other community hubs for advice and access to computers and the internet.

Be Safe, Be Included, Be Connected

Top Tip 1. Keep in touch with friends and family across the world or find long lost friends. Staying connected can improve your wellbeing.

Top Tip 2. Learn a new skill or retrain for a new job. There are many ways to learn including online courses.

Get Online - Be Connected

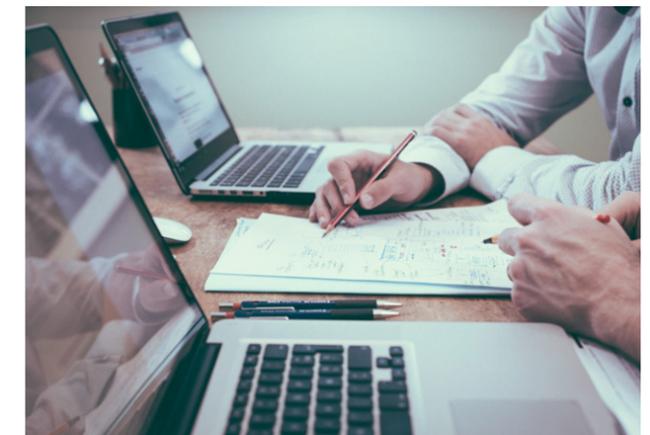
Top Tip 3. Stay up to date with events and the news; catch up on TV and radio you may have missed.

Top Tip 4. Share experiences and ideas with community groups through social media and connect with new people across the world.

Ministers also reviewed three infographics produced in collaboration by the work sector on awareness raising and promotional material, in line with their agreed areas of focus. Each infographic provides four simple tips and advice for members of the public to safely and confidently go online.

- The 'Be Safe' infographic had been launched on Safer Internet Day 2020 and provides useful tips to staying safe online.
- The 'Be Included' infographic had been launched on Safer Internet Day 2021, 09 February 2021, and provides simple tips for getting started in the online world.
- The 'Be Connected' infographic was launched at the Ministerial meeting, 05 March 2021, and covers helpful ways to get connected, making the most out of the online world and highlighting the benefits available.

Ministers discussed the benefits and increasing importance of digital participation in everyday life, particularly highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic. They recognised the scale of the challenge posed by the pace of technological change, and acknowledged the vital role played by administrations as well as voluntary, community, public sector and private sector organisations in addressing these challenges. They agreed that the work sector should continue to collaborate on the themes of promoting online safety and digital skills, addressing digital inclusion across the Member Administrations, and continuing to share best practice in these areas, all with a particular focus on young people and future skills development, as well as working in partnership with the private and third sectors to promote digital inclusion.



Misuse of Substances

hosted by the Government of Ireland - virtually, 11 March 2021



Family photograph of BIC Misuse of Substances Ministerial meeting, 11 March 2021

The BIC Misuse of Substances work sector held a Ministerial meeting in March 2021 which was hosted virtually by Minister of State for Public Health, Well Being and National Drugs Strategy Frank Feighan T.D., on behalf of the Government of Ireland.

The Government of Guernsey was represented by Deputy Al Brouard, President of the Committee for Health and Social Care. The Isle of Man Government was represented by Hon Ray Harmer MHK, Minister for Policy and Reform. The Government of Jersey was represented by Deputy Trevor Pointon, Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Robin Swann, MLA, Minister of Health and Deirdre Hargey, MLA, Minister for Communities. The Scottish Government was represented by Mairi Gougeon, MSP, Minister for Public Health, Sport & Wellbeing and Angela Constance, MSP, Minister for Drugs Policy. The UK Government was represented by Jo Churchill, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care. The Welsh Government was represented by Eluned Morgan, MS, Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language.

The importance of Health and Social initiatives to address problematic alcohol and drug use was one of the key areas of focus of discussion, and Ministers shared perspectives on policy responses across all Member Administrations. Ministers considered a paper prepared on 'Financial Mechanisms to Reduce the Consumption of Alcohol' and noted the efforts of Member Administrations to decrease alcohol consumption, agreeing that there was value in comparing approaches and sharing learnings from the emerging evidence base. Ministers considered approaches to 'Measure the effectiveness of addiction services and harm reduction strategies' across administrations, collectively recognising the importance of

effective monitoring and evaluation to ensure policy and practice is developed on sound evidence. Ministers underlined the importance of sharing this diversity of knowledge, understanding, experiences and learning across Member Administrations, providing a unique resource for enhancing monitoring and evaluation.

Prevention, Treatment & Recovery

Ministers welcomed the opportunity to hear from Professor Dame Carol Black on prevention, treatment and recovery, and her Review of Drugs in England for the UK Government Department of Health & Social Care. The Professor's presentation focused on Part 2 of her Review and provided insight into the lessons learned from the study, as well as providing a sharp focus on the need for cross-governmental approaches to policy responses tackling drugs and alcohol.

Future Work

Ministers acknowledged the challenges for the sector in the coming years and agreed that the future focus for the work sector should be on:

- Lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic for drug and alcohol services and policies;
- Measures aimed at reduction of the risk of drug-related deaths;
- Financial mechanisms to reduce alcohol related harms;
- Health and social services for people who are homeless and use drugs/alcohol; and
- Engagement with the voluntary and community sectors in the provision of drug and alcohol services.

Climate Adaptation Symposium

hosted by Government of Ireland - virtually, 20 October 2020

On 20 October 2020, the BIC Environment work sector Climate Adaptation subgroup delivered a virtual Symposium on climate resilient infrastructure, hosted by the Government of Ireland in collaboration with the BIC Secretariat. The aim of the symposium was to improve and intensify collaboration and information sharing on climate adaptation across the Member Administrations.

The symposium was opened by the Government of Ireland's Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications and Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan T.D. who emphasised the importance of regional cooperation, and the sharing of good practice in addressing the common challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. Minister Ryan highlighted the need to 'build back better' following the Covid-19 pandemic, referencing the forthcoming COP26 Conference, due to take place in November 2021.

The topics covered throughout the Symposium included:

- Resilient infrastructure: the new normal;
- Designing resilient cities: integrating economic and climate strategies;
- Mapping future flood risk to support cross-sectoral building in flood resilience;
- Adapting to climate change and increasing the resilience of the historic environment in the coastal zone;
- The Ireland-Wales CHERISH (Climate Change and Coastal Heritage) Project;
- Using climate information to test infrastructure resilience;
- Critical infrastructure resilience – the Scottish Approach; and
- Enhancing adaptation action through common planning assumptions and reporting in the infrastructure sector.



Over 80 delegates from across the BIC Member Administrations participated in the event, including representatives from Government Departments, agencies and infrastructure providers, as well as a number of adaptation experts. The Symposium included a range of presentations from key experts, and provided an opportunity for delegates to consider the topics in an interactive format through breakout sessions which focussed on the themes of Priorities, Barriers, and Tools and Data in relation to climate resilient infrastructure.



Collaborative Spatial Planning

Led by Northern Ireland Executive

The Collaborative Spatial Planning (CSP) work sector met in May, August, October and December 2020, and January 2021. The work sector also held joint meetings with the Housing work sector, in preparation for a Joint Ministerial meeting which was hosted virtually by the Northern Ireland Executive in February 2021. This Ministerial meeting provided an opportunity for Ministers from all BIC Member Administrations to consider the collaborative work undertaken by the Housing and CSP work sectors, in considering the link between housing and planning policy. This work culminated in a joint publication which provides a guide to meeting the needs of an ageing population through housing and planning policy, entitled '[Creating an Inclusive Future Vision for our Ageing Populations](#)'. Further information on the joint Ministerial meeting is available at page 5.

Creative Industries

Led by Government of Jersey

The Creative Industries work sector met virtually in June, August, October and December 2020, and in February 2021. To support the ongoing implementation of the agreed Forward Work Plan, the work sector have engaged with a series of expert guest speakers from the creative industries sector, including Thrive (Northern Ireland), Creative Scotland and Disability Arts Cymru (Wales). The work sector has also shared experiences and approaches to responding to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Creative Industries across Member Administrations. The work sector has progressed links with the Indigenous, Minority and Lesser Used Languages (IML) work sector and expect to report to Ministers at a Ministerial meeting in 2022.

Digital Inclusion

Led by Isle of Man Government

The work sector met virtually ten times at official level and once at Ministerial level. The work sector participated in Safer Internet Day 2021, which took place on 09 February 2021, through the launch of their second infographic 'Be Included', along with the creation of a web-based guide of useful links to resources about being included and keeping safe online across the BIC administrations. The work sector launched their third infographic, 'Be Connected' at the second Ministerial meeting, which was hosted by the Isle of Man Government on 05 March 2021. In addition to the preparation and planning of this Ministerial engagement, the work sector's meetings have focused on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the digital world, and agreeing the future areas of focus for the work sector.

Early Years Policy

Led by the Welsh Government

The focus of officials of the Early Years Policy work sector has been on the immediate response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the related services provided by the sector. The work sector has continued to engage, with meetings taking place in June and October 2020, and January 2021. The focus of these meetings has been to share information and experience on interventions developed and supported in response to the Covid-19 pandemic across Member Administrations. Officials shared information on their approach in seeking to provide resources for the sector and keep services available for vulnerable and key workers' children during periods where significant restrictions were in place. Information on the impacts of the pandemic on children has also been shared, helping shape plans for recovery across administrations.

Energy

Led by Scottish and UK Governments

The work sector met virtually four times, in August and October 2020, and then January and March 2021. The focus of discussions at these meetings included the impact of, and recovery from, Covid-19 on the energy sector, and the latest updates in energy policy across the Member Administrations, including on areas of possible further collaboration. Meetings also had a thematic focus, with topics including heat, offshore wind and interconnection. Officials received presentations from the UK Government on their green recovery initiatives on buildings, their offshore transmission review, and their recently published Energy White Paper. The Government of Ireland presented their policies on offshore wind and interconnection. The next meeting of the work sector will focus on hydrogen and will include participation from the BIC Transport work sector given the links between the two work sectors.

Environment

Led by UK Government

The Environment work sector held the postponed Ministerial meeting in November 2020 via a virtual platform due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the Ministerial meeting, hosted by the UK Government, Ministers reviewed the work completed by the work sector, and endorsed the proposed Forward Work Plan. Ministers also approved the establishment of an Asian Hornet Taskforce. Following the Ministerial meeting, the Environment work sector met in February 2021. In addition, the subgroups of the work sector which include Marine Environment, Marine Litter, Climate Adaptation and Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), have also held regular meetings and the Climate Adaptation subgroup delivered a virtual symposium on critical infrastructure, hosted by the Irish Government in October 2020.

Housing

Led by Northern Ireland Executive

The Housing work sector met six times between April 2020 and March 2021 and held a series of joint meetings with the CSP work sector, in preparation for a Joint Ministerial meeting which was hosted virtually by the Northern Ireland Executive in February 2021. This Ministerial meeting provided an opportunity for Ministers from all BIC Member Administrations to consider the collaborative work undertaken by the Housing and CSP work sectors in recent years. This work culminated in a joint publication which provides a guide to meeting the needs of an ageing population through housing and planning policy, entitled '[Creating an Inclusive Future Vision for our Ageing Populations](#)'. Further information on the discussion and outcomes of the Ministerial meeting is available at page 5.

IML Languages

Led by the Welsh Government

The Indigenous, Minority and Lesser Used Languages (IML) work sector met five times at official level. To support the ongoing implementation of the agreed Forward Work Plan, the work sector invited a series of expert guest speakers linked to the focus of the sector, including the Irish Language Officer at the Department for Foreign Affairs at the Government of Ireland on the use of technology and social media to promote IML languages, and the Head of Prosiect 2050 at the Welsh Government, on the 'brand of the Welsh language'. The work sector also held a webinar for officials in March 2021 hosted by the Welsh Government on the use of verbal strategy in the promotion of IML languages. Continuing the focus on the development of online resources to promote engagement with IML languages, the work sector developed a set of factsheets, phrases, online learning resources and a playlist of music in the 9 IML languages, to mark the European Day of Languages 2020 and to celebrate the arrival of Spring in 2021.

Misuse of Substances

Led by Government of Ireland

The focus of the Misuse of Substances work sector has been on the impact of Covid-19 on drug and alcohol services, and the preparation for a Ministerial meeting, which was hosted by the Government of Ireland on 11 March 2021. Officials met in November 2020, and January, February and March 2021 to support this work, and to discuss the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the sector, particularly in relation to the delivery of services. At the Ministerial meeting, Ministers reviewed the work completed by the work sector, and considered papers on financial mechanisms to reduce alcohol consumption and measuring the effectiveness of services, while also providing an opportunity for Ministers to endorse the proposed Forward Work Plan for the work sector (further information is available at page 9).

Social Inclusion

Led by Welsh and Scottish Governments

The work sector met virtually five times, in August, September and December 2020, and in January and March 2021. Discussions at these meetings included the impact of Covid-19 on social enterprises, the definition of social value, sharing best practice through case studies focused on youth social entrepreneurs, and the latest updates in social enterprise policy across the Member Administrations. At the January 2021 meeting, the work sector heard about the work of the Wales Cooperative which is aimed at promoting social enterprises, as well as from the Welsh social enterprise 'Swperbox', Wales's First Recipe Box Subscription Scheme.

In addition, a number of Member Administrations hosted social enterprise-focussed events throughout the year covering topics such as the role of social enterprises in a sustainable and inclusive approach to Covid-19 recovery and climate change. The work sector are organising a webinar focused on youth social entrepreneurship, which will take place in April 2021.

Transport

Led by Northern Ireland Executive

The work sector met four times, in June, August, November 2020 and February 2021, with a focus on sharing experience and practice in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring that opportunities to take up alternatives to public transport, including cycling and walking, are facilitated across Member Administrations. Continuing the work in re-focussing its activities, the work sector is developing a Forward Work Plan based on three main areas of focus: Modal shift; Decarbonisation of the public sector fleet; and Decarbonisation of the freight fleet, and this will be presented for endorsement at the next Ministerial meeting of the work sector. The work sector has also invited guest speakers to provide expert insights in areas linked to areas of thematic focus. In November 2020, Professor Jillian Anable, Chair in Transport and Energy in the Institute of Transport Studies at the University of Leeds presented to the work sector on her recent research on supporting behavioural change in relation to modal choice in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Communications

As part of the BIC Communications Strategy agreed in 2015, the Secretariat undertook to implement a series of actions designed to:

- Raise awareness of the Council and its activity;
- Demonstrate the value of the Council; and
- Identify learning and opportunities for collaboration and information sharing.

As well as supporting Member Administrations' communications in relation to BIC activity, the Secretariat supported a number of communications and outreach initiatives aimed at engaging the public and relevant stakeholders in the activities of the Council, with the objective of raising the awareness and knowledge of the work of the BIC.

Social Media and Online presence

Building on sustained efforts in previous years, and through ongoing coordination with Member Administrations, the Secretariat continued to drive awareness via its social media presence, increasing the number of followers and adopting novel approaches aimed at encouraging engagement with the Secretariat's social media presence and website.

British-Irish Council website

In 2020/21, the BIC website was visited by 7,868 unique visitors in total, with the majority of these visits taking place around the time of Summit and Ministerial engagements.

The Secretariat will continue to liaise with Member Administrations to coordinate communications and messaging to raise awareness of the Council's activity.

Online Safety Campaign

Building on the success of an earlier communications campaign, officials from all eight BIC administrations on the Digital Inclusion work sector collaborated on the launch of two further awareness raising infographics, 'Be Included' and 'Be Connected'. 'Be Included' was launched on Safer Internet Day 2021, and information on online safety resources across Member

Administrations was presented on the BIC's website: www.britishirishcouncil.org/work-sectors/digital-inclusion. 'Be Connected' was launched at the second Digital Inclusion Ministerial meeting which took place on Friday 05 March 2021, and provided for significant engagement on the BIC's social media.

Be Safe, Be Included, Be Connected

Top Tip 1. Always install the latest updates as they help to keep your device secure.

Top Tip 2. Use three random words to create a strong and memorable password. Use numbers and symbols to increase security.

Get Online - Be Safe

Top Tip 3. Take care with what you share online and think about who can see it.

Top Tip 4. Save your important information in more than one place.

Be Safe, Be Included, Be Connected

Top Tip 1. Start with basics. You don't have to be tech-savvy to get started. Ask family, friends, carers for help.

Top Tip 2. Be patient. Don't expect too much too quickly, building digital skills and confidence takes time.

Get Online - Be Included

Top Tip 3. You're in charge. Change your device settings to suit you. Increase text size, use text-to-speech or magnify your screen for easier viewing.

Top Tip 4. Check out your local library or other community hubs for advice and access to computers and the internet.

Be Safe, Be Included, Be Connected

Top Tip 1. Keep in touch with friends and family across the world or find long lost friends. Staying connected can improve your wellbeing.

Top Tip 2. Learn a new skill or retrain for a new job. There are many ways to learn including online courses.

Get Online - Be Connected

Top Tip 3. Stay up to date with events and the news; catch up on TV and radio you may have missed.

Top Tip 4. Share experiences and ideas with community groups through social media and connect with new people across the world.

IML Languages Phrases/Resources

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated increase in time spent online by people across the BIC administrations, the IML work sector identified an opportunity to promote virtual language learning. The work sector developed a language resources webpage, hosted on the [BIC Website](#), which provides key signposting to access a variety of language-learning resources of the 9 IML languages. To celebrate the European Day of Languages on 26 September 2020, the work sector also

developed a set of factsheets, phrases, online learning resources and a playlist of music in the 9 IML languages. For the first time, the BIC Secretariat's Christmas card, issued to a range of the Council's stakeholders and partners, featured Season's Greetings in the 9 IML languages of the Council. Continuing this initiative, the work sector also developed a useful phrase sheet to mark the arrival of Spring 2021, and will continue to further develop this range of resources.



Phrases for Spring

English	Cornish	Gaelic	Guernésiais	Irish	Jèrriais	Manx	Scots	Ulster-Scots	Welsh
Good morning!	Myttin da!	Madainn mhath	Baonjour	Móra duit ar maidin!	Bouónjour à matin!	Moghrey mie	Guid Mornin or Gweed mornin	Guid moarnin	Bore da!
Thank you!	Meur ras!	Tapadh leibh	Merci bian!	Go raibh maith agat!	Mèrcie bein des fais!	Gura mie ayd!	Thank ye	Thanks	Diolch!
You're welcome!	Wolkom os ta!	'S e do bheatha	L'affaire est bian!	Tá fáilte romhat!	I'n'y a pon d'tchil	She dty veal	Nae bather aava	Nae bather	Croeso!
A little bit	Tamm byghan	Beagan	Aen p'tit brin	Beagán.	Un p'tit mio	Beggan	A wee bittie	A wee bit	Ychydig bach
Daffodil	Lili korawys	Lus a' chrom-chinn	Pouorriaon	Lus an chromchinn	G'zette	Lus y ghuiy	Daffie	Daffie	Cenhinen bedr
I love the spring	My a gar an gwenton	Is fìor thoil leam an t-Earrach	L'érouvé mé pllaît énn amas	Is breá liom an t-earrach	J'aime bein l'érouvé	Shynney lhiam yn arragh!	I loo Spring	A lo'e Spring	Dwi'n caru'r gwanwyn
Happy Easter!	Pask lowen!	Càisg shona!	Bouan Pâques!	Cáisc Shona!	Bouan Pâques!	Caisht Sonney!	Hae a gweed Easter	Hae a guid Easter	Pasg Hapus!
I would like an Easter Egg!	My a vynnsa kavos Oy Pask!	Bu toil leam ugh na Càisge	I m'plairait énn Oeu d'Pâques	Ba mhaith liom ubh cáscal!	J'voudrais un oeu d'Pâques!	By vie lhiam ooh yn chaisht!	I wid like een o yon Easter Aigs	I wud lake een o yon Easter Eggs	Hoffwn i w'y Pasg!

Useful phrases for Spring from the 9 Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-used Languages of the British-Irish Council

HAPPY EASTER!

Council Secretariat

As part of the 2006 St Andrew’s Agreement, the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ireland agreed that ‘Following consultation with its other members, and with a view to giving further impetus to its work, the two Governments would facilitate the establishment of a standing secretariat for the British-Irish Council, if members agree’.

Subsequently, the Council made a decision to create a standing Secretariat, based in Edinburgh, which was formally established in January 2012. The Secretariat currently comprises six full-time officers assigned from the Council’s Member Administrations.

The running costs of the Secretariat for the financial year April 2020 to March 2021 were £90,037.27. These costs are shared between the eight Member Administrations using an agreed set formula. With the exception of the Secretariat office manager, costs for individual officers are met by their home administration. Funding for Summits and Ministerial meetings is met by the relevant host Member Administration.



Firth of Forth bridges

Contact

For further information please visit the website of the British-Irish Council at: www.britishirishcouncil.org

Or contact the Secretariat at:
 British-Irish Council Secretariat
 First Floor, Thistle House,
 91 Haymarket Terrace
 Edinburgh EH12 5HE

T: (+44) or (0)131 244 1935
 E: Secretariat@britishirishcouncil.org

You can also follow BIC on Twitter & Flickr:
twitter.com/BICSecretariat
<https://flic.kr/ps/2fT2zH>

2020/2021 BIC Activity

8 Member Administrations

Isle of Man, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Wales, United Kingdom, Guernsey, Jersey, Scotland

The British-Irish Council

The BIC is one of the three institutions established as part of the Multi-Party Agreement reached in Belfast in 1998 representing the east-west dimension of relations in these islands.

It is a unique forum for engagement on matters of mutual interest.

The permanent BIC Secretariat was established in Edinburgh in January 2012 staffed by officials from BIC member administrations.

11 Work Sectors

- 01 Social Inclusion
- 02 Environment
- 03 Transport
- 04 Energy
- 05 Misuse of Substances
- 06 Creative Industries
- 07 Indigenous & Minority Languages
- 08 Digital Inclusion
- 09 Spatial Planning
- 10 Housing
- 11 Early Years Policy

78 Official Meetings (2020/21)
 All virtual meetings

4 Ministerial Meetings (2020/21)

- Environment
- Joint Housing-Collaborative Spatial Planning
- Digital Inclusion
- Misuse of Substances

34 Summits

The Council held its inaugural meeting in December 1999, since then there have been over **30 Summits**

1 Heads of Administration Summit

Summit 2020 - Scotland

1 BIC Public event / Symposium

Our History

The British-Irish Council was established on 2 December 1999 on the entry into force of the British-Irish Agreement which was signed by the UK and Irish Governments as part of the agreement reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations in Belfast on 10th April 1998, hereafter referred to as the “Multi-Party Agreement”.

The text of the Agreement establishing the British-Irish Council can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/136652/agreement.pdf

The British-Irish Council comprises the UK and Irish Governments, the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the Isle of Man Government, Government of Jersey and Government of Guernsey.

The aim of the British-Irish Council as set out in the Multi-Party Agreement is to “promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships amongst the people of these islands”. It is a forum for members to exchange information, discuss, consult and use best endeavours to reach agreement on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant administrations.

The Council meets in different formats at Summit level normally twice per year, and in specific work sector formats on a regular basis with each Member Administration represented by the appropriate Minister. The Summit is normally chaired by the Head of the host Member Administration, and attended by Heads of Member Administrations and Ministers. At the Summit, Ministers consider the work of the Council in its entirety, including recommendations arising from progress in the work sector groups. In addition Ministers focus on key topics of current relevance.

