



## Welcome

The period covered by this report (April 2021 – March 2022), whilst including the tail end of the Covid-19 pandemic, paints an uplifting and positive picture of the British-Irish Council embracing a new normal and refocussing on its founding purpose,

*“to promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships amongst the people of these islands.”*

The Council’s members have driven and informed this transition at Summit level, meeting twice at Heads of Administration level for the BIC’s 35th and 36th Summits in June and November respectively.

In June the Council met in person and in virtual format in Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, hosted by the Northern Ireland Executive, to discuss the impact of Covid-19 across Member Administrations and reflect on approaches to recovery that were both sustainable and addressed the pandemic’s longer term impacts. Heads of delegation were welcomed by the Northern Ireland Executive First Minister, the Rt Hon Arlene Foster MLA, and the deputy First Minister, Michelle O’Neill MLA. Ministers also discussed the latest political developments across their administrations and engaged on a number of topics of mutual interest, including the EU-UK relationship.

In November the Council met in person in Wales, hosted by the Welsh Government in the St. Fagans National Museum of History. The heads of delegation were welcomed to St. Fagans by the First Minister of Wales, the Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS, who invited Ministers to use Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used (IML) Languages alongside English in the Summit meeting. The Council discussed the economy, trade, ongoing relations with the EU and the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), as well as the intersect between IML Languages and Early Years policy. Ministers were pleased to note that the Government of Guernsey would host the 37th BIC Summit in summer 2022.

We are pleased to report that this depth of engagement has been mirrored at portfolio level, with Ministers meeting across a range of policy areas. In October 2021

the Northern Ireland Executive hosted a Transport Ministerial in Belfast, where Ministers discussed the electrification of vehicles and plans for future collaboration. November 2021 saw the Welsh Government Chair a Ministerial discussion on IML language acquisition in early years. Ministers with responsibility for Energy met virtually in February 2022, hosted by the Government of Jersey to consider the threat of climate change, energy efficiency and energy security. Ministers took this opportunity to welcome the contribution of the BIC Energy, Environment and Transport work sectors to COP26 in Glasgow, where a BIC ministerial panel event on the importance of collaboration in meeting shared energy challenges showcased the work of the Council in driving effective climate policy.

At official level, work continues apace across the full breadth of BIC activity. Stand outs include webinars held by the Social Inclusion and (jointly) the IML and Early Years work sectors in Spring and Summer 2021. Additionally, the Secretariat has, informed by the expertise of Member Administrations, completed a review process to ensure the BIC remains both institutionally effective and focussed on the policy priorities and interests of its Member Administrations, and by extension, the people of these islands.

Reflecting on the past year and looking ahead, it is evident that the BIC continues to be a valuable and valued locus for engagement, collaboration and relationship building. Further, it is becoming increasingly clear that momentum is building within the Council on a number of thematic areas of shared interest, most notably on climate and decarbonisation. The Secretariat looks forward to supporting the Council in exploring these priorities in the years to come.



BIC Secretariat Joint Heads - Aoife Fleming (l) and William Wickman (r)

## Summit hosted by the Northern Ireland Executive, 11 June 2021

The British-Irish Council (BIC) held its 35th Summit meeting in Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, hosted by the Northern Ireland Executive. The heads of delegation were welcomed by the Northern Ireland Executive First Minister, the Rt Hon Arlene Foster MLA, and the deputy First Minister, Michelle O’Neill MLA.



Family Photo (L-R): Chief Minister Senator John Le Fondré; Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD; deputy First Minister Michelle O’Neill MLA; First Minister Arlene Foster MLA; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove MP; Chief Minister Howard Quayle MHK.

Ministers discussed the impact of Covid-19 across Member Administrations, and reflected on approaches to recovery that were both sustainable and addressed longer term impacts.

### Latest Political Developments

Ministers discussed the latest political developments across their administrations, and noted the recent elections held across a number of administrations. Ministers engaged on a number of topics of mutual interest, including the EU-UK relationship.

Further, Ministers took the opportunity to reflect on the period since the establishment of the British-Irish Council, and how the Council had evolved to adapt to a changed context. Ministers considered a number of potential developments and discussed the Council’s ability to respond to new and emerging trends and challenges.

### BIC Secretariat

The Council also noted the Secretariat’s 2020/21 End of Year Report and welcomed the publication of the Council’s Annual Report for 2020/21. The Council confirmed the Secretariat would retain the same budget for the financial year 2021/22.



Summit hosted by the Northern Ireland Executive

## Summit hosted by the Welsh Government, 19 November 2021

The British-Irish Council (BIC) held its 36th Summit meeting hosted by the Welsh Government in St. Fagans National Museum of History. The heads of delegation were greeted at St. Fagans by the First Minister of Wales, the Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS, who welcomed the opportunity for ministers to use Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used (IML) Languages in the Summit meeting.

### Latest Political Developments

The Council reflected on the latest political developments across the different administrations, and took the opportunity to engage on a number of topics of mutual interest, including the economy, trade, ongoing relations with the EU and the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26). Ministers discussed the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the progress of post-pandemic recovery programmes.

### Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages (IML) and Early Years Policy

Following a meeting of the relevant sectoral ministers, the Council held a discussion on IML Languages and

Early Years Policy to reflect on challenges and opportunities for policy approaches in this area. The Council also took the opportunity to discuss the recent work of the Council across all of its work sectors and to take note of the ongoing collaborative work being carried out by officials.

### BIC Reforms

The Council took note of progress in the implementation of reforms agreed at the 35th Summit meeting, including the formation of a Senior Officials Group and adoption of a protocol for extraordinary Summit meetings.



Family Photo (L-R): Deputy Chief Minister Jane Poole-Wilson MHK; Minister Deirdre Hargey MLA; Secretary of State Michael Gove MP; First Minister Mark Drakeford MS; First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP; Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD; Chief Minister Senator John Le Fondré; Minister Edwin Poots MLA.

## Meeting of BIC Ministers with responsibility for Transport

A successful meeting of BIC ministers with responsibility for Transport was held in Belfast on 22 October 2021 hosted by the then Minister for Infrastructure from the Northern Ireland Executive, Nichola Mallon.

This meeting of the Transport work sector was particularly timely as it allowed Ministers to take stock of efforts which were ongoing in advance of the COP26 Conference which took place in November 2021.

During the meeting, Ministers considered a paper on the Electrification of Vehicles and noted the challenges surrounding the goal of increased use of electric vehicles. Issues such as charging infrastructure; the impacts of electricity grid capacity; the recycling and availability of batteries; and the support provided by Member Administrations were all considered. Ministers discussed how this transition would make a key contribution towards the decarbonisation of transport and to achieving efficient, cleaner movement of people and goods across Member Administrations.

The Ministers agreed that the Transport work sector was a constructive forum for facilitating thematic

evidence exchange and practical collaboration. A Forward Work Plan was also agreed which focused on modal shift, the decarbonisation of public sector transport; and decarbonisation of the freight fleet. This ongoing work will support all administrations' efforts towards addressing climate change and decarbonisation.



Visit of BIC Ministers with responsibility for Transport to Translink



Family Photo Front: Nichola Mallon MLA, (former) Minister for Infrastructure, Northern Ireland Executive; Back, L-R: Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for Transport and Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Irish Government; Trudy Harrison MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, UK Government; Deputy Lindsay de Saumarez, President of the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure, Government of Guernsey; Deputy Kevin Lewis, Minister for Infrastructure, Government of Jersey; Gary Middleton MLA, junior Minister, the Executive Office, Northern Ireland Executive; and Graeme Dey MSP, (former) Minister for Transport, Scottish Government.

## Meeting of BIC Ministers with responsibility for Energy

BIC Ministers with responsibility for Energy met virtually on 02 February 2022, hosted by the Government of Jersey. The meeting was jointly chaired by Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport from the Scottish Government; and Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change in the UK Government.

### Forward Work Plan

Ministers agreed a Forward Work Plan focusing on collaboration in the areas of decarbonising heat; offshore renewables, including wind, marine, grid and interconnection; new and emerging technologies, such as hydrogen and CCUS; as well as local and community energy.

### Shared Challenges

Ministers also discussed the shared challenges faced by Member Administrations including the threat of climate

change, the desire to make greater progress in energy efficiency, and the need to ensure energy security.

Ministers recognised that the path each Administration is taking towards a net zero carbon future varied according to regional strengths, availability of natural resources and political priorities but noted that by sharing information and experiences the BIC Energy work sector continued to bring important benefits and opportunities for all of its members.

### COP26

Ministers noted the contribution of the BIC at COP26 in Glasgow, where a ministerial panel event on the importance of collaboration in meeting shared energy challenges showcased the work of the BIC in driving effective climate policy.



## Ministerial discussion meeting on Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-used Languages (IML) Acquisition in Early Years

In November 2021 the Welsh Government hosted the 36th British-Irish Council Summit in Cardiff. The topic focus of this Summit was Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-used Languages (IML) Acquisition in Early Years. The Ministerial discussion meeting was held virtually ahead of the Summit, and included a presentation on the cognitive benefits of early year language acquisition from a leading minority language expert, Professor Antonella Sorace, Professor of Developmental Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh.

Ministers also observed that recruiting and retaining a suitable workforce for IML early years settings is vital, and that providing the right support to parents of young children learning IML languages is also imperative.

At the end of the Ministerial discussion, it was evident that each Member Administration faced similar challenges and opportunities in supporting the growth of IML languages in the early years. There was a collective view from Ministers that the BIC, via the IML and Early Years Policy work sectors, provided a valuable forum to work collaboratively on interventions, initiatives and shared best practice.

This subject area was further discussed at Heads of Administration level during the Summit itself.

### 2021-22 Stakeholder events

#### Joint IML/Early Years webinar

In June 2021 the Early Years Policy and the IML work sectors joined together to host a webinar which focussed on some of the priorities of the work sectors. As both of these work sectors are chaired by the Welsh Government, the webinar was opened by Mr Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language at the Welsh Government.

The webinar was attended by policy officials working in both the Early Years and IML sectors, as well as some partners and stakeholders who were engaged in these areas. Guest speakers addressed varied topics of interest during the webinar as preparation for a Ministerial discussion that was held later during the year.



## Youth Social Entrepreneurship Webinar

The Social Inclusion work sector hosted a webinar on Youth Social Entrepreneurship in April 2021, bringing together policy officials, partners, stakeholders and young people to share experiences and perspectives on how best to support youth social entrepreneurship.

This webinar included presentations from those working to promote youth social entrepreneurship in Primary and Secondary Education settings and amongst

Young Adults. Participants also considered innovative approaches to supporting youth social entrepreneurship and the importance of working within ecosystems and partnerships to support this aim. The event involved inspiring speakers from across the BIC administrations, and demonstrated that opportunities that exist for administrations to work with each other to strengthen youth social entrepreneurship and to share knowledge and best practice.



## Work Sector review

In March 2022, officials representing different work sectors from across the BIC administrations came together for a day of discussions and workshops to examine the role of the existing work sectors and their potential future evolution. Work sector representatives considered a series of topics, including how best to develop Forward Work Plans that provided value to each administration; how to collaborate across cross-cutting themes, particularly in the area of climate change and environment; and how work sectors could make the most of Ministerial-level engagements. The representatives also considered how

their work could evolve in the future including through strengthened engagement with external stakeholders.

The reflections provided by work sector representatives, supplemented by a questionnaire completed by each administration, will inform the development of the future work of the British-Irish Council, so as to respond more effectively to new and emerging trends and challenges and to continue its objective of positively strengthening links and relationships between the people of these islands.



### Collaborative Spatial Planning *Led by Northern Ireland Executive*

The Collaborative Spatial Planning work sector continued to work on the objectives set out in their Forward Work Plan throughout the reporting year. The group invited expert speakers to present to them in relation to positive place making and high street renewal. The group received virtual presentations on Northern Ireland's Living High Streets Craft Kit and from Cork City Council on their post-Covid recovery plans.

### Creative Industries *Led by Government of Jersey*

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant effect on the creative industries sector, with most venues and business completely closed. The Creative Industries work sector pivoted to online meetings at the earliest opportunity, and group members found it to be a valuable forum for each Member Administration to share their experiences and challenges of the sector and to update each other on support plans for the industry. During the virtual meetings a number of speakers were invited to present to the group which proved very engaging.

The group conducted a site visit in October 2021 to the Wakefield Production Park to see the latest developments in the creative industries first-hand, and is now in the process of producing an interactive e-publication. The work sector has begun consideration of their next forward work plan to present to Ministers in September 2022.

### Digital Inclusion *Led by Isle of Man Government*

The Digital Inclusion work sector began a new Forward Work Plan which focuses on: online safety; building digital skills, motivation and confidence; young people and future skills; and partnerships.

### Energy *Led by Scottish and UK Governments*

The Energy work sector have held thematic meetings focusing on hydrogen, and local and community energy, that saw Member Administrations share and explore recent policy developments. The work sector contributed to the BIC event held at COP26 and also prepared discussion papers for a successful Ministerial meeting in February 2022.

Officials have met to discuss and identify key areas of collaboration within the Forward Work Plan topics, organised a site visit to the Meta headquarters in Dublin to consider online harm reduction and have agreed to work towards a Digital Inclusion Symposium which would include public, private and third sector participation

### Drugs and Alcohol *Led by Irish Government*

Top of the agenda for the Drugs and Alcohol work sector was the theme of Covid-19 and to consider the lessons of Covid-19 for the design and delivery of drug and alcohol services. With drug-related deaths a major public health concern across BIC Member Administrations the work sector has been sharing information and learning from each other's initiatives, highlighting how we care for the most vulnerable and most at risk in our society. Finally, the work sector also collaborated with the Housing work sector to consider joined-up approaches to meeting the health and social needs of people experiencing homelessness and drugs/alcohol issues.

### Early Years Policy *Led by the Welsh Government*

The work sector held four virtual meetings to progress the approved work plan. Developing the theme of Outdoor Play officials led a successful presentation on Nature Schools. The approved work plan also identified the value of joint work with the Indigenous, Minority and Lesser Used Languages work sector. In this regard a joint webinar was delivered in June 2021 which brought together policy officials, expert speakers and key stakeholders from across the eight Member Administrations.

Towards the end of the year the work sector had a Presentation on 'Making it REAL' ('R' for Raising; 'E' for Early; 'A' for Attainment and 'L' for Literacy), from the Jersey initiative in conjunction with the National Children's Bureau (NCB) and the Jersey Child Care Trust.

Ministers endorsed a revised Forward Work Plan to focus on the thematic topics of: decarbonising heat; offshore renewables including wind, marine, grid and interconnection; new and emerging technologies including hydrogen and CCUS; and local and community energy. The Energy and Housing work sectors are considering how to collaborate given the clear links in the areas of local and community energy, energy efficiency and fuel poverty.

## Environment

### Led by UK Government

The Environment work sector's interaction takes place within its five subgroups; Climate Adaptation, Marine Environment, Marine Litter, Invasive Non-Native Species and the Asian Hornet Taskforce.

The Marine Environment subgroup has been particularly active over the last 12 months holding webinars on blue carbon, an interactive webinar with the North East Atlantic Hub, a full day virtual blue carbon workshop which was hosted by the UK Government, and also engagement at COP26 in November 2021.

The remaining sub groups have met regularly and focus on their work plan objectives, including the new Asian Hornet Taskforce which was mandated by Ministers at the last Environment Ministerial meeting. The Taskforce has been an important and formative platform for Member Administrations and stakeholders, particularly with examples from Jersey and Guernsey, to engage in discussions about the best way to address Asian Hornet infestations. The Invasive Non-Native Species subgroup will promote Invasive Species week in May 2022.

## Housing

### Led by Northern Ireland Executive

The Housing work sector explored the topics of design issues and the provision of housing for key workers, in line with the Forward Work Plan agreed in February 2022. Officials contributed to an information paper on climate adaptation and energy efficient approaches to new and existing housing in each Administration. They met in Jersey in March 2022 for a site visit to key worker housing developments, and a presentation by officials from Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. The work sector also collaborated with the Drugs & Alcohol work sector to identify topics of interest for a joint symposium on homelessness and substance use.



BIC Housing work sector visit to Jersey, March 2022

## Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used languages

### Led by the Welsh Government

In response to the pandemic, the Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-used Languages work sector continued to develop virtual resources, hosted on the BIC website and promoted on social media by all Member Administrations. This included:

- producing a factsheet on environmental phrases to link in with the European Day of Languages and the COP26 Summit
- raising awareness of the BIC IML languages by sharing resources to enable people to learn the languages

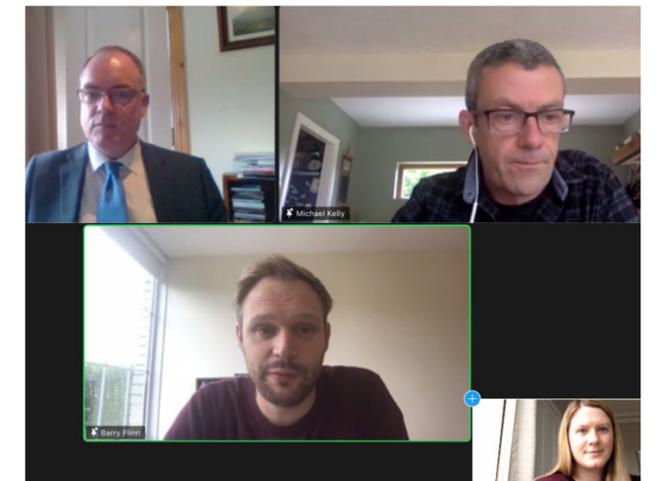
- creating a factsheet on all nine languages represented by the work sector
- a varied online playlist of songs in all languages.

The group also invited speakers to present virtually to them on many of the areas included in the Forward Work Plan, for example the social use of language and understanding technology and its impact on IML languages. The work sector benefited greatly by having this engagement from stakeholder representatives of the BIC Member Administrations.

## Social Inclusion

### Led by the Scottish and Welsh Governments

The Social Inclusion work sector hosted a webinar on youth social entrepreneurship with delegates from across the eight administrations, and arranged a virtual visit of four social enterprises based in Ireland. The group have been working on organising a symposium entitled "Social Value as a Driver for Social Enterprise" to be held in Dublin in April 2022. They are also preparing a paper setting out their work on social value and a report on social enterprises in preparation for the Social Inclusion Ministerial meeting due to be held in Wales in October 2022.



BIC Social Inclusion virtual visit to Ireland, September 2021

## Transport

### Led by Northern Ireland Executive

Following the Ministerial meeting in October, it was agreed that the future work of the Transport work sector would focus on modal shift, the decarbonisation of public sector transport and decarbonisation of the freight fleet. The work sector has taken its first steps to implement the agreed Forward Work Plan, with the Scottish Government leading work on the topic of

demand management, which will allow for the further exploration of equitable options to discourage car use. The work sector are also gathering information on steps taken to facilitate active travel in each administration in work jointly led by the Governments of Jersey and Guernsey and have shared expertise on topics such as e-scooter trials and 5-15 minute journeys.

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.

Joint Heads Interview with Celtic Media Festival

The Secretariat have been developing a partnership with Celtic Media Festival in recent years. In 2021, the Festival took place entirely online and the Joint Heads participated in an interview with the Director of the Festival, taking the opportunity to introduce the work of the BIC in the Creative Industries and Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used languages work sectors to the media professionals attending the event. The Secretariat will continue to develop its cooperation with Celtic Media Festival into 2022 when the event will return to an in-person format.

IML Language resources

The IML work sector continued developing online resources for language-learning including on the BIC website. To mark the COP26 conference which took place in Glasgow in November, the work sector

created a phrase sheet of key environmental phrases, which was disseminated on the Secretariat's social media as well as those of the BIC member administrations.

English	Cornish	Gaelic	Guernésiais	Irish	Jèrriais	Manx	Scots	Ulster-Scots	Welsh
Climate change	Chanj an hin	Atharrachadh na gnàth-shìde	Lé chàngement du clyinmat	Athrú aeráide	Lé chàngement du clyinmat	Caghlaa yn emshyraght	Climate chyngie	Climate altherin	Newid hinsawdd
Global warming	Tommheans ollvysel	Blàthachadh na cruinne	L'Écaoufferie Globale	Téamh domhanda	La cauff'thie globale	Chìow ny Cruinnee	Global (yirdly) warmin	Worl' wairmin	Cynhesu byd-eang
Endangered species	Eghen beryllys	Beathach an cunnart (singular) Beathaichean an cunnart (plural)	L's espèces en dangier	Speicis i mbaol	L's espèces m'nichies	Keint-cretoor ayns gaue (Singular) Keintyn-cretoor ayns gaue (plural)	Threitent speshies	Species gat dangersum scairse	Rhywogaethau sydd mewn perygl
Extinct	Difeudhys	À bith	Dépéri	Diothaithe	Péthinnmé	Currit mow	Dee'd aff	Dee'd oot	Diiflanedig
An environmentalist	Kerghynedhor	Neach-àrainneachd	Énn enviraon-nementaliste	Gníomhaí timpeallachta	Eune envithonn' mentaliste	Fer-coadee yn theihil dooghysaght	A Enverminatlist/ Uphauder(s) o wir enverment	An environmentalist	Amyg/cheddwr
Renewable energy	Nerth nowedhadow	Cumhachd Ath-nuadhachail	Pouvouaer r'nouv' llàblle	Fuinneamh in-athnuaithe	Pouver r'nouv' labl'ye	Bree aanoagh	Replinishable energy (eldin)	Renewable energy	Ynni adnewyddadwy
Carbon footprint	Ol troos karbon	Lorg carboin	La maerque à tcherbaon	Lorg carbóin	L'empreinte dé'tcherbon	Ynyyd-coshey carbon	Carbon fitprent	Carbon fitprent	Ôl troed carbon
Sea level rise	Ughehans nivel an mor	Àrdachadh ire na mara	La haoucherie au livé d'la maire	Àrdú leibhéal na mara	La haüchithie du nivé d'la mé	Yrjaghey yrjid ny marrey	Sea spate	Risin' sea watter levels	Cynnydd yn lefel y môr
Global average temperature	Tempredh kreskek ollvysel	Teothachd chuibeasach na cruinne	La température mouoyanne du maonde	Meán teocht domhanda	La tempéthatuthe mouoyenne du monde	Tempreilys meanagh ny cruinnee	Global (yirdly) arage temperature	Worl'wide average temperature	Tymheredd cyfartalog byd-eang
Fossil fuels	Keunys menhes	Connaidhean-fossail	Les fouaiteumes fossiles	Breosla iontaise	Les fouailles fossiles	Connaghyn-fossyl	Fossil eldin	Fossil fuels	Tanwyddau ffossil
Net Zero	Ylyn Mann	Cothromachadh Carboin	Érian Naette	Foirgneamh neodrach ó thaobh fuinnimh	Lé zéro net	Corrymid Charbon	Tot Zero	Net Naethin	Sero-net

The British-Irish Council at COP26

The Secretariat moderated a discussion between the Chair of the Transport work sector, Nichola Mallon MLA, Northern Ireland Executive; and the Co-Chair of the Energy work sector, Cabinet Secretary Michael Matheson MSP, Scottish Government at the COP26 Conference in Glasgow in November 2021. The discussion on “Meeting shared climate challenges through the British Irish Council” focussed on developing renewable offshore energy, decarbonising public and freight transport, and coherent planning of environmental biodiversity strategies, and included a lively conversation with an engaged audience.



The Climate Adaptation sub-group organised an event on “Cultural Heritage and Climate Resilience” at the Resilience Hub in Glasgow during COP26. Speakers from several BIC administrations discussed the impact of climate change on historic environments, such as cultural heritage and archaeological sites, and the risks posed by sea level rise and coastal erosion. The event comprised contributions from schoolchildren and thematic poetry and videography, as well as a series of presentations and a panel discussion between experts in the field of cultural heritage. A recording of the event is available [online](#).

**DAY 12 Agenda**  
**Closing Day**

**09:00 - 10:00**  
Breakfast Reception

**10:15 - 11:15**  
Co-operating on Shared Climate Challenges through the British Irish Council

**11:30 - 12:30**  
Looking to the Future with Fusion Energy

**12:45 - 13:45**  
Collaborating for the Energy Transition: How 2050 Calculators can Inform Long Term Energy Strategies and NDCs

**14:00 - 15:00**  
The Road Beyond COP26: A Conversation with African Gender Networks Leading Climate Action

**15:15 - 16:00**  
Closing Reception on the Presidency year ahead

**Cultural Heritage and Coastal Resilience**

**KEY NOTE:** Julie James, Minister for Climate Change, British Government

**SPEAKERS:** Dr Hannah Black, Historic England; Dr Anthony Potts, Ocean Decade Heritage Network; Colin Eastman, Historic Environment Scotland; Hazel Mann, COP26, NECA; Louise Barker, Marine Heritage Project; Dr Mairi Eames, Historic Environment Scotland

**#BICOP26**  
**GLASGOW, SCOTLAND.**



### 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 in Edinburgh which was formally established in January 2012.

The Secretariat currently comprises six full-time staff on assignment from the Council’s Member Administrations.

The Secretariat running costs for the financial year April 2021 to March 2022 were £109,771.19. 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 staff are met by their parent administration as they are on loan to the Secretariat. Funding for Summits and Ministerial meetings is met by the host Member Administration.

### Contact

For further information please visit the website of the British-Irish Council at: [www.britishirishcouncil.org](http://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](mailto:Secretariat@britishirishcouncil.org)



### 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](http://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.

### 2021/2022 BIC Activity

**8 Member Administrations**

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

**55 Official Meetings** (2021/22)  
Mix of virtual and in-person meetings

**2 Ministerial Meetings** (2021/22)  
- Transport  
- Energy

**3 BIC Stakeholder Events**  
- 2 Webinars  
- 1 Work Sector Review Event

**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 Drugs & Alcohol
- 06 Creative Industries
- 07 Indigenous, Minority & Lesser-Used Languages
- 08 Digital Inclusion
- 09 Spatial Planning
- 10 Housing
- 11 Early Years Policy

**2 Heads of Administration Summits**

- 35th Summit: Northern Ireland Executive
- 36th Summit: Welsh Government

