



# British-Irish COUNCIL





## Welcome

In a year which marks the 25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, an agreement which established the British-Irish Council, we are pleased to present our Annual Report for 2022/23.

In the time covered by this report, the Council has met twice at Heads of Administration level. The 37th Summit in Guernsey in June 2022 focused on collaborative spatial planning and town centre revitalisation. The 38th Summit, hosted in Blackpool in November 2022, focussed on sustainable economic growth and regeneration.

At portfolio level, Ministers with responsibility for social enterprise met in Cardiff in October 2022, and Ministers for the creative industries met in the Isle of Man in March 2023.

Alongside all of this, and across the Council's eleven thematic work sectors, officials have met regularly both in person and virtually to work together on issues of common interest. Highlights include a symposium on social enterprises held in

Dublin in April 2022 and a joint symposium, in May 2022, bringing together officials responsible for housing policy and drugs & alcohol policy. Similarly, in March 2023, housing and energy officials came together for a webinar to discuss common challenges in relation to the decarbonisation of heat.

The many commemorative events to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement have acted as a powerful reminder of the importance of that agreement and of the British-Irish Council within it.

The Secretariat wishes to thank the officials, Ministers, and others who have supported the Council in delivering its essential purpose 'to promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships amongst the people of these islands'. In looking towards the year ahead, we look forward to working together to ensure the Council remains a useful and productive forum for its members.



BIC Secretariat Joint Heads - Ciara Gilvarry (L) and Jacob Cain (R)

## Summit hosted by the Government of Guernsey, 8 July 2022

The British-Irish Council held its 37th Summit meeting in Guernsey, hosted by the Government of Guernsey. Ministers were welcomed by the Chief Minister of the Government of Guernsey, Deputy Peter Ferbrache.



Family Photo (L-R): Chief Minister John Le Fondré, Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD, First Minister Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Chief Minister Deputy Peter Febrache, Chief Minister Alfred Cannan MHK, First Minister Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS, Minister of State for Northern Ireland Rt Hon Conor Burns MP

### Collaborative Spatial Planning

In advance of the Summit, Ministers with responsibility for collaborative spatial planning met to share best practice on the contribution of spatial planning to town revitalisation and the decarbonisation agenda. The Council further discussed this topic during the Summit meeting, noting that an opportunity existed to revitalise towns and make them places where people want to live, do business and spend their leisure time. Ministers discussed how this could be achieved while delivering on a range of wider outcomes including inclusive development, addressing climate change, supporting green recovery and promoting active and sustainable travel.

Scan the QR Code below for a link to the full Summit Communiqué



### Latest Political Developments

The Council also reflected on the latest political developments across their administrations, and took the opportunity to engage on a number of topics of mutual interest. These included the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the impact of the rising cost of living particularly in the areas of fuel and housing, shared climate and decarbonisation objectives, ongoing relations with the EU, and the continuing challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Press conference following the 37th BIC Summit in Guernsey



## Summit hosted by the UK Government, 11 November 2023

The British-Irish Council held its 38th Summit meeting in Blackpool, hosted by the UK Government. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak welcomed delegates to the Summit, and Heads of Administration discussed the topic of sustainable growth and regeneration.



Family Photo (L-R): Chief Minister Alfred Cannan MHK, First Minister Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD, Prime Minister Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chief Minister Deputy Peter Febrache, Chief Minister Kristina Moore

### Sustainable Growth and Regeneration

The Council discussed the topic of sustainable growth and regeneration considering efforts underway across BIC Member Administrations to stimulate and support sustainable economic growth, the development of more inclusive communities, and to address pressures on housing in particular. During their visit to Blackpool, Ministers also had the opportunity to undertake some site visits to inform the Summit discussion, including the Blackpool Illuminations.

### Latest Political Developments

Ministers discussed the latest political developments across administrations, and took the opportunity to engage on a number of topics including the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the impact of the rising cost of living, shared climate and decarbonisation objectives, and the EU-UK relationship.

The Council received an update on Northern Ireland and looked forward to the restoration of the devolved institutions. Ministers underlined the importance of supporting the effective functioning of all of the agreement's institutions, including the British-Irish Council.



Press conference following the 38th BIC Summit in Blackpool

Scan the QR Code below for a link to the full Summit Communiqué



## Meeting of BIC Ministers with responsibility for Social Enterprise

In October 2022, the Welsh Government hosted a meeting of BIC Ministers with responsibility for social enterprises in Cardiff, Wales. The programme included visits to Llanrumney Hall, a local social enterprise that highlights the positive impact of community-led regeneration in mitigating poverty and revitalising local communities. Ministers also had the opportunity to engage with a number of local social enterprises focussed on climate and decarbonisation-related activities.

themes: the role of social enterprises in building sustainable communities and resilient local economies, their contribution to the climate change agenda, and raising awareness of their importance in creating more inclusive and sustainable societies.

Scan the QR Code below for a link to a video presented at the Ministerial



During the Ministerial meeting, Ministers reviewed the work sector's activities in implementing the agreed work plan which included sharing information and best practice on promoting the importance of social entrepreneurship, particularly among young people, and the inclusion of social value in public procurement contracts. Ministers also endorsed a proposed new work plan for the work sector which is focused on three



Family Photo (L-R): Tom Arthur MSP, Minister for Public Finance, Deputy Kirsten Morel, Minister for Social Security, Joe O'Brien, Minister of State Department of Rural and Community Development, Deputy Elaine Miller, Minister for Social Security, Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Economy, Deputy Steve Falla, Vice President Committee for Economic Development



## Meeting of BIC Ministers with responsibility for the Creative Industries

The Creative Industries work sector held a Ministerial meeting hosted by the Isle of Man Government in March 2023. The meeting included a presentation on 'Social Prescribing in Primary Care Settings' by Paul McGinney, Director of Local Services in Community and Local Services for the Government of Jersey.

Ministers reviewed the work undertaken by officials from the Creative Industries work sector who had shared their learning, perspectives and experiences in developing and supporting creative industries across BIC Member Administrations.

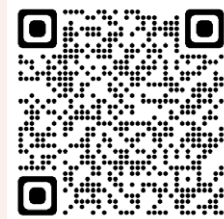
Ministers also discussed how to support wellbeing through and within the creative industries as well as how creative industries can contribute to positive wellbeing and population health. They noted that Member Administrations face shared challenges delivering creative industries driven approaches to improving wellbeing that are sustainable, impactful and provide good value for money. Ministers recognised the value of continuing to share information and experiences through the BIC Creative Industries work sector.

They agreed a plan for the future focus of the work sector. This included supporting the growth and resilience of the

sector through the use of technology, considering ways to harness creative approaches to societal issues as well as linkages with other work sectors such as Social Inclusion and Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages.

Ministers also took the opportunity to undertake a number of site visits on the Isle of Man who are involved in the 'Celebrating Creativity Together' project. This project allowed the island's creative businesses and individuals to collaborate on a set of community art exhibitions, and look at the social value of creativity and place-based community engagement. These included Quayles Hall, Fynoderee Distillery and GreenlightTV.

Scan the QR Code below for a link to a video presented at the Ministerial



Family Photo (L-R): Deputy Sasha Kazantseva-Miller, Member of the Committee for Economic Development, Deputy Kirsten Morel, Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, Tim Johnston MHK, Minister for Enterprise, Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport and Chief Whip

## Social Inclusion Symposium, April 2022

In April 2022, the Social Inclusion work sector hosted a dynamic two-day symposium in Dublin focused on 'Social Value as a Driver for Social Enterprise'. Delegates visited local social enterprises, participated in engaging panel discussions, and attended interactive workshops on topics such as measuring social value and young entrepreneurs tackling climate change. The event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, fostering collaboration and emphasising the importance of social value in driving social enterprise growth. Through thought-provoking sessions and networking opportunities, the symposium inspired attendees and strengthened connections across the local social enterprise sector and attending policy officials from the BIC Member Administrations.



Social Inclusion Symposium, Dublin, April 2022

## Housing and Drugs & Alcohol Symposium, May 2022

In May 2022, the Housing work sector held a symposium titled Working Together to Meet the Healthcare Needs of People Experiencing Homelessness and Substance Use Issues in Dublin. The event was jointly organised by the BIC's Housing and Drugs & Alcohol work sectors, chaired by the Northern Ireland Executive and the Government of Ireland respectively. The symposium provided an opportunity for those working in the housing, drugs and alcohol, health, and homelessness sectors to come together to share learning on how better to meet the needs of those who suffer homelessness, particularly for those also dealing with substance use related harm.

The discussions and workshops were wide ranging, thought provoking and in many cases inspirational. Policymakers, national experts, service providers, voluntary and community organisations and people with lived experience contributed to develop solutions to better align responses

and ensure improved outcomes. The event provided officials from across BIC Member Administrations with useful insights to assist policy makers and service providers shape interventions into the future.



Housing and Drugs & Alcohol Symposium, Dublin, May 2022

## Celtic Media Festival, June 2022

As a sponsor of the Celtic Media Festival, the BIC Secretariat hosted a reception at the 2022 festival, which brought together film makers, presenters, producers and commissioners. Through this engagement, the BIC was showcased as a useful forum for engagement on supporting the use of indigenous, minority and lesser-used languages throughout a broad range of cultural outputs.



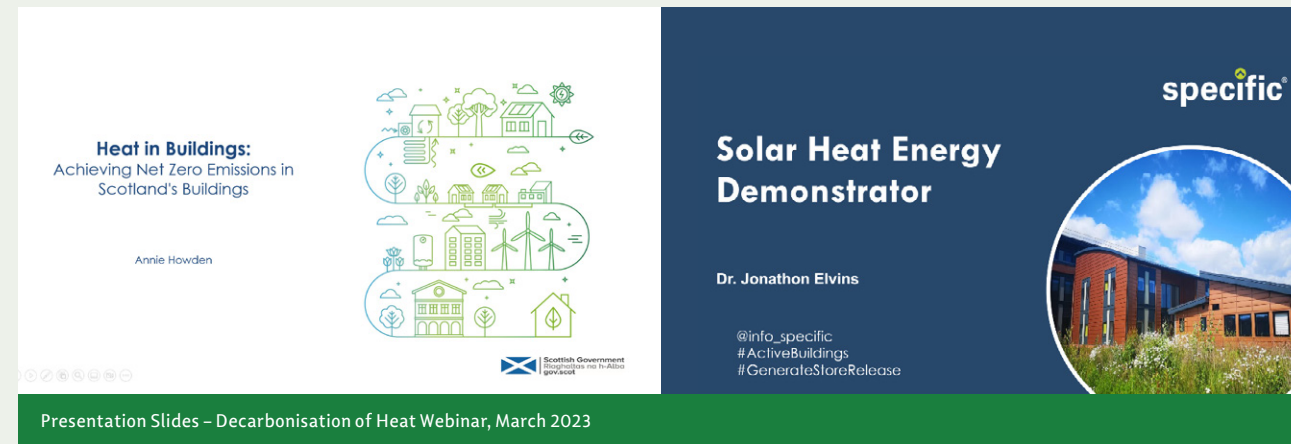
Celtic Media Festival, Quimper, June 2023



## Decarbonisation of Heat Webinar, March 2023

In recent times, the British-Irish Council has sought to mainstream climate and decarbonisation throughout the totality of its thematic activity. In this context, the Council's Housing and Energy work sectors agreed to collaborate on a joint webinar to explore the linkages between their respective policy areas, and how these interlink with efforts focussed on the 'Decarbonisation of Heat'.

The webinar featured initiatives underway across the BIC Member Administrations on related topics including heat strategies, energy efficiency, and retrofitting existing housing supply, and brought together officials from across the Member Administrations, as well as a cohort of relevant external partners and stakeholders.



Presentation Slides – Decarbonisation of Heat Webinar, March 2023

## 25th Anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement

In marking the 25th Anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, the BIC Secretariat has represented the Council at a number of commemorative events hosted by the UK and Irish Governments, and external partners. Attendance at these events provided an opportunity to engage with a diverse range of stakeholders in raising the profile and highlighting the value of the BIC as an institution established under the agreement.

Looking ahead, the BIC Secretariat will be exploring ways to continue to mark the anniversary of the BIC as an institution, marking 25 years since the inaugural BIC Summit in December 1999.



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

The Collaborative Spatial Planning work sector enabled Ministers to come together at the 37th BIC Summit in Guernsey to discuss the role of planning in town centre revitalisation and building better places. Aside from this, the work sector has continued to share experience and best practice in a range of areas, including engaging with the Scottish Government's Fourth National Planning Framework launched in February 2023.

### Creative Industries Led by the Government of Jersey

A meeting of Ministers with responsibility for the Creative Industries took place in the Isle of Man in March 2023. In preparation, the work sector developed a report which highlighted some of the measures undertaken across BIC administrations to address the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Creative Industries.

The Ministerial meeting reviewed this report and approved the proposed new work plan.

Scan the QR code for a link to the Creative Industries Report



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

Following on from the 2021 Ministerial, the Digital Inclusion work sector continued its focus on Online Safety, Building Digital Skills and Literacy, and Developing Relationships with the Private and Third Sectors. As part of this, in June 2022, the work sector travelled to Dublin, Ireland where officials across BIC Member Administrations were able to gain valuable insights into Meta's flagship FUSE programme which focused on online safety and anti-bullying in Ireland.

### Drugs and Alcohol Led by the Government of Ireland

In May 2022, the Drugs & Alcohol work sector collaborated with the Housing work sector to deliver a symposium on Working Together to Meet the Healthcare Needs of People Experiencing Homelessness and Substance Use Issues. In October 2022, the work sector also visited Glasgow to consider a range of harm reduction initiatives underway in the area, including the Managed Alcohol Programme (MAP) and the Enhanced Drug Treatment Service (EDTS).



Drugs & Alcohol work sector visit to the Managed Alcohol Programme in Glasgow, October 2022

### Early Years Led by the Welsh Government

The Early Years work sector has continued to implement its agreed work plan objectives on workforce, narrowing the gap and language and quality. In June 2022, the work sector travelled to Jersey to consider low cost activities to support parental engagement and to encourage early language and communication skills. In October 2022, officials travelled to Dublin to visit to witness the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) in practice.

### Energy Led by the Scottish and UK Governments

Following the Energy Ministerial meeting in February 2022, the work sector continued its focus on renewable energy technology with a visit to Pembrokeshire in Wales in October 2022, where officials witnessed renewable and marine energy projects underway in the area. In March 2023, in partnership with the Housing work sector, the group hosted a joint webinar on heat decarbonisation, bringing together policy officials and relevant external stakeholders from across the BIC Member Administrations to share experience and learnings related to the decarbonisation of heat across the housing and energy sectors.

Environment

Led by the UK Government

The Environment work sector has five subgroups: Climate Adaptation, Marine Environment, Marine Litter, Invasive Non-Native Species and the Asian Hornet Taskforce. The Invasive Non-Native Species, the Asian

Hornet Taskforce and the Climate Adaptation groups have been particularly active over the last 12 months, exchanging information and discussing common areas of concern.

Housing

Led by the Northern Ireland Executive

Throughout the year, the Housing work sector has hosted and attended a number of events related to the agreed work plan objectives including a joint symposium with the Drugs & Alcohol work sector and a joint webinar on Heat Decarbonisation with the Energy work sector.

In addition, the work sector was hosted in Belfast in January 2023 to examine and consider approaches to retrofitting and energy efficiency, with a particular focus on social housing.



Workshop underway at the Drugs & Alcohol and Housing Symposium in Dublin, April 2022

Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages

Led by the Welsh Government

In September 2022, the Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages work sector travelled to Connemara, Ireland. The aim of the visit was to create a link with the community which culminated in a Ceoltóirí Óga Chois

Fharraige and 'Ár gConair' concert. The work sector also continued to develop virtual resources to support language learning including a phrase sheet on culture and music to celebrate International Mother Language Day in 2023.

British-Irish COUNCIL  
International Mother Language Day  
21 February 2023

English	Jèrriais	Irish	Guernésiais	Welsh	Gaelic	Scots	Kernewek (Cornish)	Manx	Ulster Scots
Music	La musique	Ceol (an ceol)	La musique	Cerddoriaeth	Ceòl	Music	Ilow	Kiaull	Music
Poetry	La poésíe	Filíocht (an fhilíocht)	La pouésíe	Barddoniaeth	Bàrdachd	Poetry	Bardhonieth	Bardaght	Rhymín'
Singing	La chant'tíe	Amhránaíocht (an amhránaíocht)	La chànterie	Canu	Seinn	Singin	Kana	Singal	Singin'
Dancing	La dans'síe	damhsa / rince (an damhsa/an rince)	La dânserie	Dawnsio	Dannsa	Dancin	Donsya	Daunsin	Dancin'
Culture	La tchultúthe	Cultúr (an cultúr)	La tchulture	Diwylliant	Cultar	Cultur	Gonisogeth	Cultoer	Culture
Storytelling	La racont'tíe	Scéalaíocht (an scéalaíocht)	La caonterie	Dweud stori	Seanchas	Storytelling	Hwedhla	Skealaght	Yairn tellin'
Performance	La jouéthíe	Taispeántas (an taispeántas)	La vèthíe	Perfformiad	Taisbeantas	Performance	Performans	Cloie	Shew
Festival	Eune fête	Féile (an fhéile)	Énne faête	Gŵyl	Féis	Fest	Gool	Fealley	Festival
Instrument(s)	Un instrument	Uirlis (an uirlis)	Énn instrument (D's instruments)	Offeryn (nau)	Ionnsramaid (ean)	Instrument	Daffar ilow	Greie-kiaullee	Instrument(s)
Local Instrument	Eune chifournie (Hurdy-Gurdy)	Bodhrán (Irish frame drum)	Énne chifournie (Hurdy-Gurdy)	Telyn deires (Welsh triple harp)	Piob-mhór (Bagpipe)	Clarsach (Celtic harp)	Kroder krogghen (Crowdy-crawn)	Fiddyl (Fiddle)	Begpipes (Bagpipes)

BIC: Music & Culture  
Key Words

International Mother Language Day phrase sheet 2023

Social Inclusion

Led by the Scottish and Welsh Governments

As well as holding a symposium in Dublin in April 2022, on 'Social Value as a Driver for Social Enterprise', the Social Inclusion work sector also held a Ministerial meeting in October 2022, hosted by the Welsh Government in Cardiff. In March 2023, work sector officials were hosted in Belfast to gain an insight into the social enterprise economy and ecosystem in the area.

Transport

Led by the Northern Ireland Executive

In April 2022, the Transport work sector met in Guernsey to see a number of infrastructure improvements that have been made on the island to support modal shift, including cycling and electric vehicles. The work sector has also continued collaboration and discussion on modal shift and car-use reduction.



## History & Purpose

The British-Irish Council was established on 2 December 1999, as part of the British-Irish Agreement signed by the UK and Irish Governments, which was a key part of the Multi-Party Agreement reached in Belfast on 10 April 1998.

The aim of the Council, as set out in the agreement is to promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands. The Council comprises the UK and Irish Governments, the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, as well as the Isle of Man Government, Government of Jersey, and Government of Guernsey. The Council serves as a forum for exchanging information, discussing, consulting, and reaching agreements on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant administrations.

The Council meets in different formats, including at Summit level twice per year, and in specific work sector formats on a regular basis. At Summits, Ministers consider the work of the Council in its entirety, including recommendations arising from progress in the work sector groups, and focus on key topics of current relevance.

## Council Secretariat

As part of the 2006 St Andrews Agreement, the UK Government 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 2022 to March 2023 were £124,545.26. The Secretariat is funded jointly by the eight Member Administrations using an agreed split funding model. With the exception of the Secretariat Office & Administration Manager, costs for individual staff assigned to the Secretariat are met by the relevant Member Administration.

## Contact

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

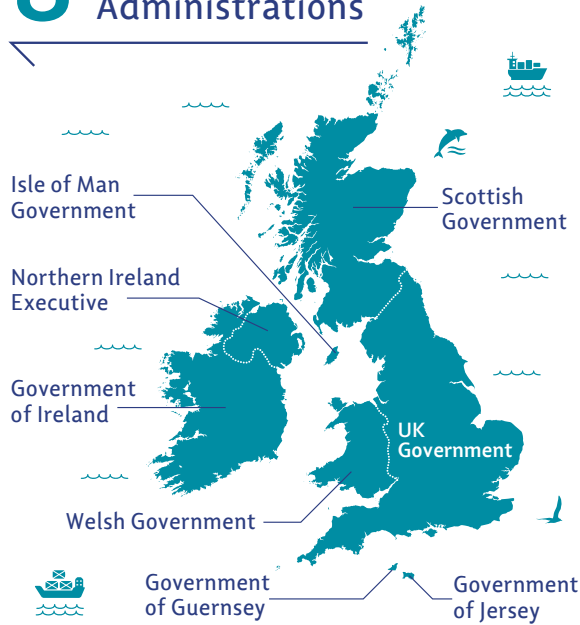
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## 2022/2023 BIC Activity

### 8 Member Administrations



**39** Official Meetings  
2022/23

**2** Ministerial Meetings  
2022/23

13 in-person and 26 virtual



- Creative Industries
- Social Inclusion

**3** BIC Stakeholder Events

**1** Webinar  
Energy and Housing

**2** Symposia  
Social Inclusion  
Drugs & Alcohol and Housing

### 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 Collaborative Spatial Planning
- 10 Housing
- 11 Early Years

### 2 Heads of Administration Summits

- 37th Summit  
Guernsey
- 38th Summit  
Blackpool





