



British-Irish COUNCIL

Annual Report 2016



8 Member Administrations

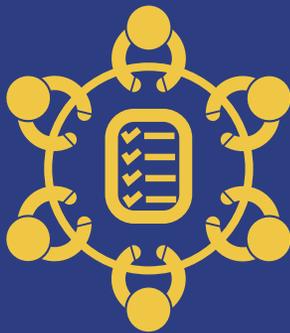


51 Official Meetings

2016

2 Ministerial Meetings

2016



28 Summits

The Council held its inaugural meeting in December 1999, since then there have been **28 Summits**

The British-Irish Council

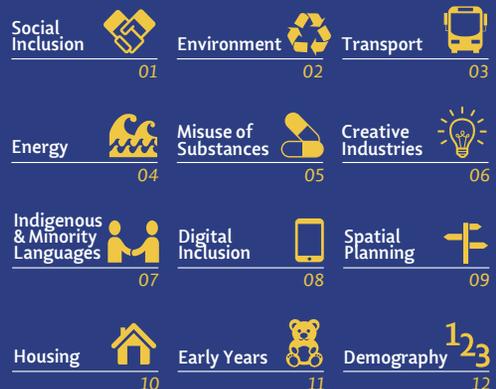
The BIC is one of the institutions established as part of the Multi-Party Agreement reached in Belfast in 1998 representing the east-west dimension of relations in these islands.

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.

12 Work Sectors

2016



3 Heads of Administration Summits

Summits 2016



- Glasgow
- Cardiff (July)
- Cardiff (November)

On behalf of the British-Irish Council, the Secretariat is pleased to present our Annual Report for 2016.

In an eventful year across our Member Administrations, the Council has been no less busy, convening three Summits including an extraordinary Summit in Cardiff in July following the United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union. This topic was a key feature of discussions at all three summits this year. Other Council highlights in 2016 were two Ministerial meetings, one in Guernsey and one in Edinburgh where Ministers discussed environmental and demographic policy issues respectively. Both meetings resulted in publication of policy papers on the Council's website.

The cycle of elections across many Member Administrations in 2016 and the priorities established in the ensuing programmes for government illustrated the common social and economic challenges which affect people across these islands. As the governments and administrations of these islands work to address those issues, the Council has a powerful role to play in facilitating the exchange of information and learning how best to address some of these challenges.

Since it was first established in 1999, the Council has provided a unique framework within which the governments and administrations across these islands can meet and cooperate. In 2016 the Council's Member Administrations have again underlined their belief in its unique role in generating opportunities for discussion, information sharing and practical collaboration on matters of mutual interest.

In 2016 the Council's Secretariat and Member Administration officials progressed a review of the Council instigated at the Dublin Summit in 2015 and progressed at the London Summit that same year. As part of this process the Council's Secretariat convened a seminar in Belfast in February to engage government stakeholders in considering how the Council can evolve in the years ahead. The day provided a valuable opportunity to hear from speakers across the Member

Administrations and to shape the review process. This work was progressed at subsequent Council Summits, including an agreement in Glasgow in June to implement a Task and Finish approach to the Council's work sectors.

As part of a review of our communications approaches, the Secretariat has also relaunched the Council's website to make it easier for visitors to the site to learn about the Council. The new website provides better interaction with the Council's social media accounts to improve real time communication of BIC activity.

Looking to 2017, we will be working closely with Member Administration officials to finalise the review of the Council's activity. Much progress has been made in the last eighteen months and wider political developments across these islands serve to highlight the importance of the British-Irish Council as an active and relevant forum where our governments and administrations can come together.

Finally, our thanks to Secretariat staff and officials across Member Administrations who have supported the Council in delivering an exceptionally demanding programme of activity in 2016, including facilitating an additional Summit and an intensified programme of work sector meetings. We look forward to a fruitful year ahead as we begin preparations for a similarly busy agenda in 2017.



BIC Secretariat Joint Heads - Deirdre Ní Fhallúin (l) and Isabel Conway (r)



Glasgow Summit, 17th June 2016

In June the 26th British-Irish Council Summit was hosted in Glasgow by the First Minister of Scotland, the Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP. This was the fourth Summit hosted by the Scottish Government since the Council was established.

Priorities for Member Administrations

At the Summit the Council reflected on recent elections across a number of Member Administrations, and discussed how the Council could continue to promote cooperation on issues of mutual interest such as economic progress in Member Administrations, education and closing the attainment gap, housing and healthcare. The Council noted that there might be scope for new areas of cooperation based on emerging priorities across these islands. The Council also discussed the forthcoming referendum on the UK's membership of the EU.

Carers: Supporting people who provide unpaid care in the home

Ministers with particular responsibility for unpaid carers met in advance of the Summit to consider a detailed paper prepared by the Council's Social Inclusion work sector. The discussion was then taken forward by Heads of Administration.

'The Council agreed that carers are an integral part of society, caring for family, friends and neighbours affected by physical or mental illness, disability, frailty or substance misuse.'

Main picture above - from left to right - 1 Chief Minister, Senator Ian Gorst, Government of Jersey. 2 First Minister, Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM, Welsh Government. 3 deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MLA, Northern Ireland Executive. 4 An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, Irish Government. 5 First Minister, Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Scottish Government. 6 Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon David Mundell MP, UK Government. 7 First Minister, Rt Hon Arlene Foster MLA, Northern Ireland Executive. 8 Chief Minister, Hon Allan Bell MHK, Isle of Man Government. 9 Chief Minister, Deputy Gavin St Pier, Government of Guernsey.

The Council noted that whilst caring can be a positive and rewarding experience, high-intensity caring in particular can result in poor carer health, both physically and mentally. Across Member Administrations, carers' policy sits within a wider context of tackling economic, health and social inequalities and, with regard to young carers, within the holistic, child-at-the-centre approach. The Council reflected on the benefits of preventative approaches rather than crisis-led responses, as well as greater integration of services at a local level.

'The Council reflected on the benefits of preventative approaches rather than crisis-led responses, as well as greater integration of services at a local level.'

The Council agreed that further action is required to support carers. Member Administrations committed to working together in order to further their knowledge and understanding of good practice in supporting carers, especially with regard to young carers and older carers; carer identification; and telecare, telehealth and assistive technology. The Council discussed life after caring at the Summit and it was agreed that this should also be a priority. Member Administrations will continue to work with partners in the statutory and third sectors,

in communities and in academia to take forward this agenda. The work sector paper has been published on the BIC website.

BIC Review

The Scottish Government updated the Council on the work done in advance of the Summit to take forward the BIC Review. The Council agreed to examine whether there were common policy objectives in emerging and established Programmes for Government across Member Administrations and whether there would be scope for further collaboration. The Council also agreed the introduction of a Task and Finish approach to the work of the current BIC work sectors to ensure continued relevance.





Extraordinary Summit, Cardiff, 22nd July 2016

The Council held an extraordinary Summit meeting in July 2016, hosted by the Welsh Government in Cardiff. The heads of delegation were welcomed to Cardiff by the First Minister of Wales, the Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM.

This meeting of the Council was convened to consider the outcome of the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the EU. Member Administrations discussed the result and reflected on the implications for individual BIC Member Administrations, including those Administrations that are not part of the EU, as well as for the Council as a whole. The Council noted a number of priority areas where implications arise, in particular: the economy and trade, the Common Travel Area, relations with the EU and the status of all citizens affected by the change.

During discussions, Ministers collectively reaffirmed the importance of the Council as a key institution of the 1998 Agreement.

'Ministers underlined the importance of the British-Irish Council as a unique forum to share views, enhance cooperation and strengthen relationships amongst all Member Administrations at this time.'

The Council reiterated their commitment to facilitating harmonious and mutually beneficial relationships among the people of these islands. It was agreed that the Council should be fully utilised to ensure that all Member Administrations work together to this end. The Council also agreed that an update on developments following the referendum result, including for the BIC work sectors, would be facilitated at the next BIC Summit.

Main picture above - from left to right - 1 Senator Ian Gorst, Chief Minister, Government of Jersey; 2 Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister, Scottish Government; 3 Mr Martin McGuinness MLA, deputy First Minister, Northern Ireland Executive; 4 Mr Enda Kenny TD, An Taoiseach, Irish Government; 5 Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister, Welsh Government; 6 Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, UK Government; 7 Rt Hon Arlene Foster MLA, First Minister, Northern Ireland Executive; 8 Hon Allan Bell CBE MHK, Chief Minister, Isle of Man Government; 9 Deputy Gavin St Pier, Chief Minister, Government of Guernsey.

Ministers attending BIC Summit meetings in 2016



Cardiff Summit, 25th November 2016

The Council held its 28th Summit meeting in November 2016, hosted by the First Minister of Wales, the Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM. This was the fifth Summit hosted by the Welsh Government since the Council was established.



The United Kingdom's exit from the European Union

This was the first meeting of the Council since it convened in Cardiff in July 2016 for an extraordinary Summit to discuss the outcome of the United Kingdom's (UK) referendum on membership of the European Union (EU). Ministers used the discussion to reflect on developments since that meeting.

Ministers updated the Council on their activity in respect of the UK's exit from the EU, particularly with reference to relations between Member Administrations, and arrangements that have been put in place to facilitate and strengthen engagement.

They also further discussed some of the themes identified in July, including in relation to specific sectors such as the agriculture, agri-food and fisheries industries, economy and trade, free movement of goods and people, the Common Travel Area and relations with the EU.

Ministers noted an update on implications for the Council work sectors of the UK's exit from the EU. They mandated officials to keep this under review and to report back to the Council.

In concluding their discussions, the Council again reiterated their commitment to facilitating harmonious and mutually beneficial relationships as set out in the 1998 Agreement. Ministers agreed that the forthcoming developments underline the importance and value of the Council as a unique forum to share views, enhance cooperation and strengthen relationships.

Early Years: Investing for the Future

Ministers with particular responsibility for early years policy met in advance of the Summit meeting to consider a paper prepared by the Council's Early Years work sector. This discussion was subsequently taken forward by Heads of Administration who welcomed the progress made by Member Administrations in taking forward the early years agenda since the 2012 Summit.

'The Council agreed that the early years play a critical role in creating strong foundations for children and families to thrive.'

Ministers also recognised the importance of investment in the early years to generate better value for money in the public sector by moving from curative to preventative models of service delivery and supporting social mobility.

Responding to the paper prepared by the work sector, Ministers had a detailed discussion about the key challenges and opportunities ahead. All administrations affirmed the significant benefits gained from their collective participation in this work sector and endorsed proposals for future collaboration, particularly in relation to the following priorities: the Workforce; Supporting Families; Parenting; and Quality Assurance and Assessment of Developmental Progress.

Review of Work Sectors

The Council noted progress on a review of its activity, including analysis of emerging and established Programmes for Government across Member Administrations. A number of areas and emerging topics, such as Public Health and Raising Attainment, are under review and a further report will be provided to the Summit in June 2017.

Ministers also welcomed the implementation by the existing work sectors of the Task and Finish approach adopted at the Glasgow Summit and they endorsed the Forward Work Plans proposed by the Environment, Early Years and Transport work sectors.



Main picture above - from left to right 1 Dr Katherine Zappone TD, Irish Government. 2 Deputy Rod Bryans, Government of Jersey. 3 Martin McGuinness MLA, Northern Ireland Executive. 4 Fiona Hyslop MSP, Scottish Government. 5 Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP, UK Government. 6 Robin Walker MP, UK Government. 7 Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Scottish Government. 8 Deputy Paul Le Pelley, Government of Guernsey. 9 Enda Kenny TD, Irish Government. 10 Alun Davies AM, Welsh Government. 11 Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM, Welsh Government. 12 Hon Graham Cregeen MHK, Isle of Man Government. 13 Deputy Gavin St Pier, Government of Guernsey. 14 Rt Hon Arlene Foster MLA, Northern Ireland Executive. 15 Peter Weir MLA, Northern Ireland Executive. 16 Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, UK Government. 17 Caroline Dinenage MP, UK Government. 18 Hon Howard Quayle MHK, Isle of Man Government. 19 Mike Russell MSP, Scottish Government. 20 Senator Ian Gorst, Government of Jersey. 21 Mark McDonald MSP, Scottish Government.



Environment (led by the UK Government) Guernsey, 4th November 2016

In November the Environment work sector held its fourteenth Ministerial meeting, hosted by Deputy Barry Brehaut, President of the Committee for the Environment and Infrastructure, on behalf of the Government of Guernsey.

The Environment work sector is led by the UK Government and Dr Thérèse Coffey MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Life Opportunities chaired the meeting which focused on addressing the problem of food waste and on improving the quality and quantity of recycling.

Addressing the problem of Food Waste

Ministers discussed the issue of food waste and responses across their administrations. Tim Smith, Group Quality Director at Tesco, attended for the first part of this item to set out how they are addressing the global issue of food waste and working to meet an ambition of sending no surplus food which could be safely eaten to waste from their UK stores by the end of next year. This approach includes partnering with producers and growers to tackle food waste across the supply chain and helping customers reduce waste in their homes.

Ministers endorsed the need to tackle food waste for a variety of financial, environmental and moral reasons.

'All members of the Council share the goal of reducing food waste wherever possible.'

Ministers agreed that all members of the Council will wish to see concrete steps taken towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal target to: By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses. Finally Ministers committed to working together to develop and share ideas and experiences of policy interventions to support each administration's ambitions on food waste.

The paper prepared by the work sector can be viewed on the British-Irish Council website:
www.britishirishcouncil.org/areas-work/environment.

Recycling – Improving Quality and Quantity

Following the discussion on food waste, Ministers discussed the matter of recycling and how to improve both quality and quantity. They noted that the materials that flow through our economy represent a valuable resource and that recycling those materials can create economic opportunities for business and local authorities, while playing an important part in minimising our call on dwindling global resources. Ministers noted that the diverse experiences across administrations presented opportunities for collaboration and learning to enable the citizens of these islands to view everyday materials as a resource and to recycle them effectively.

‘Ministers noted that the diverse experiences across administrations presented opportunities for collaboration and learning.’

In conclusion, Ministers agreed that all Member Administrations should continue to share information and experiences in relation to challenges, particularly with reference to increasing the quantity and quality of recycling and improving material prices. They agreed that where opportunities arise to work together to tackle common challenges on recycling, then Member Administrations should do so. They also agreed to

identify and share research in relation to recycling within cities.

The paper prepared by the work sector can be viewed on the British-Irish Council website: www.britishirishcouncil.org/areas-work/environment.

Invasive Non-Native Species

Following on from the 13th BIC Environment Ministerial held in the Isle of Man in 2014, Ministers reaffirmed the threats posed to their respective ecosystems from Invasive Non-Native Species. They noted that this continued to be a matter of concern across these islands and agreed to continue collaboration and cooperation between all BIC Member Administrations, including holding a workshop in 2017 for those working on this issue.

Protecting Our Natural Capital And Resources

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to agreements on Natural Capital and Resources made at the Council’s London Summit in November 2015. They discussed and noted the progress made on those agreements in the intervening period, including a series of workshops earlier in 2016 which explored matters relating to pollinators and to natural capital accounting. Ministers agreed to continue collaboration and cooperation on Natural Capital and Resources.



Pictures above - Ministers attend Environment meeting in Guernsey



Demography (led by the Scottish Government) Edinburgh, 9th December 2016

In December the Demography work sector held its second Ministerial meeting hosted by the Scottish Government at General Register House, Edinburgh.

The Demography work sector is led by the Scottish Government and Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs hosted the meeting on behalf of the Scottish Government. The meeting focused on the demographic drivers for the redesign of public services with a particular focus on population ageing.

Population-Ageing-Society: The Policy Implications

Ministers welcomed the constructive and practical achievements of the work sector in sharing policy good practice. They noted the positive and dynamic relationships which had been established through the

group's work over the last two years. They also commended the development of the innovative strategic framing tool, the 'Rapid Reflection' model, which is being made available to Member Administrations to support further policy discussions taking account of population ageing.

Ministers noted that through its work the group has identified a set of challenges which may have policy implications for work being taken forward in other Council workstreams. They agreed that the Council Secretariat and Coordinators should explore these matters further through relevant BIC work sectors.

‘The Population-Ageing-Society report highlighted scope for inter-governmental collaboration on the analytical challenges of measuring and understanding both our shared, inter-dependent and individual demographic trends.’

Ministers noted that, in line with the Council's task and finish process, the work sector will conclude following

presentation of this report and strategic policy model. They mandated the Council Secretariat and Coordinators to ensure that any future opportunities for demographic collaboration across these islands are brought forward for consideration at Summit level.

The report prepared by the work sector can be viewed on the British-Irish Council website: www.britishirishcouncil.org/publications.



As part of a review of the Council instigated at the Dublin Summit in June 2015 and progressed at the London Summit in November that year, the Secretariat organised a seminar at the Titanic Centre in Belfast in February 2016 to engage government stakeholders in considering how the Council can evolve in the years ahead.

Sixty officials attended the seminar from across the eight Council Member Administrations including most of the Northern Ireland Executive work sector members. Speakers from across government in Member Administrations shared their views on the Council, on parallel institutions and on the developments in relationships across these islands, providing a context and prompt for subsequent debate among officials.



'The discussions and exchanges throughout the day prompted the development of a pragmatic approach which helped to shape subsequent review activity which was progressed at Council summits later in 2016.'

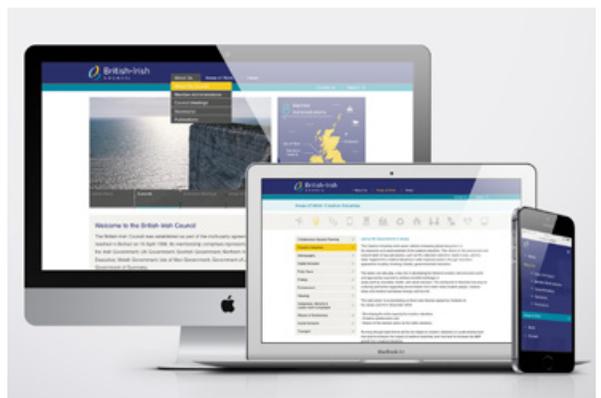
Launch of new BIC website

Following a review of the Council's communications activity and approaches, the Secretariat commissioned and implemented a redesign of the Council's website in the autumn of 2016.

With a focus on clearer navigation and transparency, the new website was launched in November 2016 and seeks to make it easier for visitors to learn about the role and work of the Council.

The new website has improved search functionality for news stories, publications and Council meetings. It also provides better interaction with the Council's social media accounts through Twitter and Flickr feeds to improve real time communication of BIC activity. The design allows for the site to be accessed in tablet and mobile versions to make it easier to read using these devices.

We will be regularly updating the website's content with news stories and papers, as well as ensuring the work sector pages reflect the most up to date news on their activity.



In 2016 the Council had twelve work sectors: Collaborative Spatial Planning; Creative Industries; Demography; Digital Inclusion; Early Years; Energy; Environment; Housing; Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages; Misuse of Substances; Social Inclusion; Transport. In addition to the work sector activity noted on pages 4-13, information on the other work sectors is provided on the following pages.

Collaborative Spatial Planning - led by Northern Ireland Executive

At the Glasgow Summit in June 2016 Ministers endorsed a work plan for the Collaborative Spatial Planning work sector, mandating them to develop an evidence base on the barriers and levers to housing and infrastructure deliverability and requesting that they report back to Ministers at a Collaborative Spatial Planning Ministerial meeting with recommendations on actions which assist in integrated housing and infrastructure delivery.



At a meeting in Guernsey in April the group agreed (i) to develop an evidence base; (ii) to establish the context; (iii) to examine the barriers and levers to deliverability and (iv) to look at innovative solutions. Government of Guernsey representatives also briefed the group on the redevelopment of the harbour at St Peter Port. This group's work was progressed at a workshop on the 'Barriers and Levers to Housing Deliverability' which formed part of the group's meeting in Jersey in September, where Government of Jersey representatives provided a presentation and walking tour to view the action it had taken to regenerate St Helier.

Creative Industries - led by Government of Jersey

The BIC Creative Industries officials group met in February 2016 to progress the work mandated by the first Creative Industries Ministerial meeting in October 2015 and to reflect on opportunities to seek the views of academics and those involved with creative, economic, cultural and environmental issues throughout the process. A further meeting was held in Cardiff in June 2016, which provided an opportunity to visit examples of grassroots music venues to learn of the challenges which they face. The group also visited a working film studio and met with skills providers and a local businessman to hear about the challenges faced by the music industry.

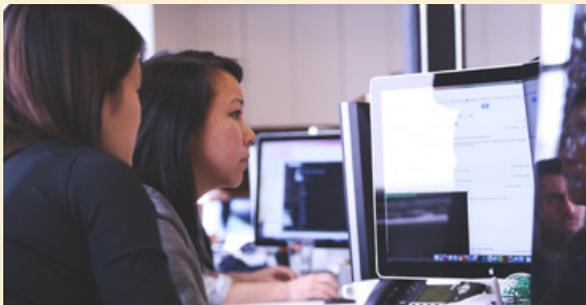
In October 2016 the group met in Dublin and the hosts arranged for the group to meet with working artists in their creative setting, and for a presentation on the history of uilleann piping from an archivist who outlined the work done to keep this traditional skill alive. Further progress was made at an October meeting held in London which focussed exclusively on examining how current data collected across Member Administrations could be used to determine the financial and well-being benefits of the creative sectors.



Digital Inclusion - *led by Isle of Man Government*

Developments in digital technology have generated a period of massive social and cultural change. However, there is an overwhelming correlation between digital and social exclusion – three quarters of socially excluded people are also digitally excluded. This work stream looks at areas of commonality between different administrations and collaborates to share best practice and information.

This work sector met three times during 2016: March in London, July in Guernsey and October in Dublin. The group has used these meetings to share evidence on improving wellbeing and reducing loneliness through technology as well as building effective partnerships with the private and voluntary sector. The group are also progressing work to inform a Ministerial meeting in June 2017 to consider Digital Skills. The group has also visited and spoken to a number of digital innovators such as digital hubs in Guernsey and Dublin.



Energy - *led by Scottish and UK Governments*

The new joint Energy work sector – formerly two subgroups looking at marine energy and grids - met quarterly in 2016, twice by teleconference and twice in person. The group have been collaborating on a new work programme including updating the Council's All Islands Approach to Energy Resources from the 2011 London Summit. The group will look to reflect developments in the intervening period and include an updated map as a reference tool.

The group are also collaborating on plans for a Ministerial meeting in 2017.

Housing - *led by Northern Ireland Executive*

The fourth BIC Housing Ministerial meeting was held in Edinburgh in November 2015. Ministers asked the work sector officials to provide a full report to their next meeting in 2017 on (i) the impact and future of innovative policy interventions to increase housing supply through alternative funding mechanisms and collaborative relationships, and (ii) the role of housing policies in delivering wider regeneration and social value goals.

The officials group met in January 2016 in Dublin to discuss and plan how it would progress the work mandated by Ministers and to visit a number of housing initiatives included refurbished housing units in the city centre, a new development in an historic street scape and a visit to Ballymun, the largest urban regeneration project in Europe. In June 2016 the group met in Jersey to progress the work commissioned by Ministers and to hear updates from other administrations on key housing developments. They also availed of the opportunity to view some of St Helier's new and refurbished social housing, and a new private development which incorporates a number of affordable units.



In November the group met in Belfast where they discussed developments on the range of housing issues. Examples of housing policy delivery and its impact on social and economic regeneration were visited in Belfast and at an ex-Ministry of Defence site in Ballymena.

Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-used Languages - *led by Welsh Government*

Since the last Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-used (IML) Languages Ministerial meeting in 2014 work sector officials have been meeting regularly to progress the issues mandated by Ministers. The IML Languages officials group met in London in January 2016 to discuss the outcome of a Technology Conference which had taken place in Dublin in October 2015. They also discussed wider policy developments across Council administrations and the economic impact of languages in each jurisdiction.



In June 2016 the group met in Guernsey to progress work in preparation of a report to the next Ministerial meeting. Whilst on the island they took the opportunity to meet with some adult and returning Guernesiais learners to discuss action needed to revitalise interest in the language. In September 2016 the group met in Edinburgh to finalise arrangements for the Ministerial meeting which will take place in 2017 and to plan the future work of the group. This provided the opportunity for the group to visit a Gaelic Medium Primary School in Edinburgh.

Misuse of Substances - *led by Irish Government*

The Misuse of Substances work sector comes together to consider programmes and policies to tackle drugs and alcohol misuse.

In 2016 the work sector met in April in London and September in Jersey. Throughout the year, the group heard from a number of speakers and received presentations from a variety of experts on crime prevention, alcohol and drugs strategies, links between substance misuse and interpersonal violence, partnership approaches and legislation. The group visited customs operations while in Jersey, meeting staff and hearing about recent trends.

The group intend holding a Ministerial meeting in 2017.

Transport - *led by Northern Ireland Executive*

The Transport work sector has been comprised of two sub-groups looking at accessible transport and sustainable transport issues across Member Administrations. In 2016 it was decided that the work sector would focus on Sustainable Transport in the period ahead.



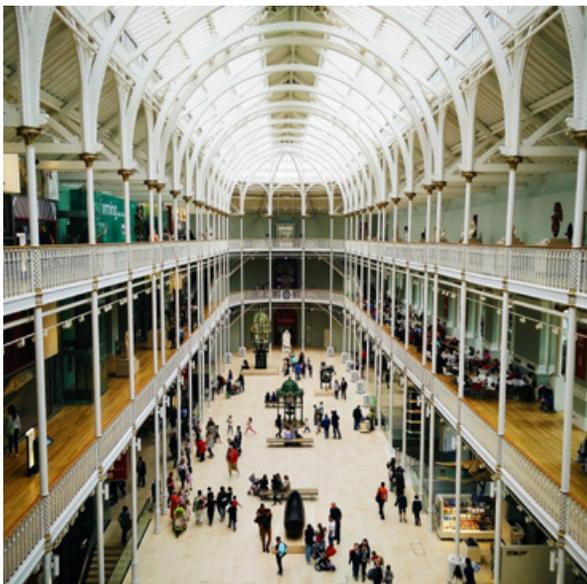
The group met in Cardiff during April 2016 and again in Edinburgh during November 2016. Issues discussed included disability awareness, accessibility issues, and compatibility of coaches. The group received presentations on the Voluntary Welsh Bus Standard and Belfast Cycle Network Schemes. The group's work in 2017 will focus on preparing for a Ministerial meeting in 2018.

As part of the 2006 St Andrews 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 five full-time staff on assignment from the Council's Member Administrations.

The Secretariat running costs for January to December 2016 were £104,000. 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



National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh

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:
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<https://flic.kr/ps/2fT2zH>



The British-Irish Council was established on 2nd 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.britishirishcouncil.org/about/british-irish-agreement

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.

