



**Joint Ministerial meeting of the Collaborative Spatial
Planning & Housing work sectors
25 February 2021**

COMMUNIQUÉ

The British-Irish Council Collaborative Spatial Planning (CSP) and Housing work sectors held a joint Ministerial meeting today via a virtual format, hosted by the Northern Ireland Executive. Ministers were welcomed by Nichola Mallon MLA, Minister for Infrastructure, and Deirdre Hargey MLA, Minister for Communities, on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive.

The British-Irish Council, established in 1999, is a forum for its members to discuss, consult and use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of its Member Administrations. The British-Irish Council CSP and Housing work sectors are led by the Northern Ireland Executive, and these two groups have proved to be constructive forums for facilitating thematic evidence exchange and practical collaboration. The meeting held today focused on the joint work that the two groups had undertaken recently. The meeting also considered how the Housing and Collaborative Spatial Planning work sectors can enable BIC Member Administrations to continue to work together on the key areas of planning and housing, particularly in the context of the impact of Covid-19.

The meeting was jointly chaired by Nichola Mallon MLA, Minister for Infrastructure, and Deirdre Hargey MLA, Minister for Communities, from the Northern Ireland Executive. The Northern Ireland Executive was also represented by Junior Minister Gary Middleton MLA. The Government of Guernsey was represented by Deputy Victoria Oliver, President of the Development and Planning Authority. The Government of Ireland was represented Mr Darragh O'Brien T.D., Minister for

Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Mr Peter Burke T.D., Minister of State for Local Government and Planning. The Isle of Man Government was represented by Hon Tim Baker MHK, Minister for Infrastructure, and Hon Ray Harmer MHK, Minister for Policy and Reform. The Government of Jersey was represented by Deputy John Young, Minister for the Environment, and Deputy Russell Labey, Minister for Housing and Communities. The Scottish Government was represented by Mr Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning. The UK Government was represented by Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP, Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Welsh Government was represented by Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government.

Ministers considered and reflected on the papers from each of the work sectors that were presented at the Ministerial meeting, which included a discussion on challenges and opportunities for the housing and planning sectors. Ministers also endorsed a joint publication prepared by the CSP and Housing work sectors on key spatial planning and housing challenges associated with an ageing population entitled “*Creating an Inclusive Future Vision for our Ageing Populations*”.

Future work

Ministers noted and agreed the content of the forward work plans for both the CSP Housing work sectors, which identify the areas of focus for the work sectors for the next 3 years. The areas of focus for the CSP work sector agreed by Ministers to focus on were:

- The Contribution of Spatial Planning to the revitalisation of towns
- The Contribution of Spatial Planning to ‘Building Better Places’ in the context of the Covid recovery
- Best practice in National/Regional Planning Frameworks
- Promotion of expert learning and experience sharing

The areas of focus for the Housing work sector agreed by Ministers to focus on were:-

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

It was agreed that the next Ministerial meeting for each of the two work sectors would take place in 2023.

British-Irish Council Secretariat
25 February 2021