



**HOUSING MINISTERIAL MEETING
EDINBURGH
WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2015**

Communiqué

The fourth British-Irish Council Housing Ministerial meeting was hosted by Margaret Burgess, MSP on behalf of the Scottish Government in Edinburgh today.

The British Irish Council was established in 1999. The Housing work sector is led by the Northern Ireland Executive and plays a unique and important role as it provides a forum for its members to further, promote and develop links between its Member Administrations through positive, practical relationships and it provides a forum for consultation and exchange of information on matters of mutual interest. The meeting focused on Innovative Policy Interventions to Fund Housing Initiatives.

Representatives

The meeting was chaired by Mervyn Storey, MLA, Minister for Social Development in the Northern Ireland Executive. Minister Storey was accompanied by Jennifer McCann, MLA, Junior Minister Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

The UK Government was represented by Peter Schofield, Director General Housing and Planning and the Irish Government was represented by Paudie Coffey, Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

The Scottish Government was represented by Margaret Burgess, MSP, Minister for Housing and Welfare and the Welsh Government was represented by Lesley Griffiths, AM, Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty.

The Government of Jersey was represented by Anne Pryke, Minister for Housing and the Government of Guernsey was represented by Mike Hadley, Deputy Minister Housing Department.

The Isle of Man Government was represented by the Hon Juan. P. Watterson MHK Minister, Department of Home Affairs.

Ministerial Discussion

Ministers welcomed a presentation by John McCord, Department for Social Development, Northern Ireland on the report entitled “Innovative Policy Interventions to Fund Housing Initiatives” which sets out the range of policies being adopted across all BIC Member Administrations to fund housing provision.

Ministers noted the enormous impact which the global economic downturn had had on the housing market and on the delivery of housing across all BIC administrations. Many citizens had seen the value of their home depreciate resulting in their facing negative equity. Governments too had faced significantly reduced capital budgets and a rapidly contracted development industry, whilst at the same time facing increased need as a result of demand outstripping supply. This combination of factors was having an adverse effect on the number of new social and affordable homes being built in the rental and private rental sectors, as well as the number of homes coming to the market for private sale.

Governments across the BIC Member Administrations have developed policies to address this unprecedented situation. Ministers discussed the range of innovative solutions which had been developed across member administrations to address the unique difficulties faced by each, and how these are assisting housing providers (public, voluntary or private) to access new and alternative funding mechanisms.

Discussion included feedback on the experience of each administration on the effects of their policy interventions and on the financial instruments used to increase the housing supply and improve the standards of the existing housing stock.

Ministers also received a presentation from Alistair Steele, MBE, Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association on Partnership Working which set out how the Sector in Scotland have delivered by developing the relationship between Government; the Local Authority; Housing Association and Stakeholders to deliver projects on the ground.

Ministers welcomed the updated Housing Directory which provided details of good practice across Administrations.

Future Work Programme

Ministers requested that BIC member administrations explore the possibility of a common set of definitions which will enable collection and collation of common datasets to facilitate benchmarking. Ministers have tasked the group to examine how housing policy can continue to innovate to deliver increased housing supply through alternative funding mechanisms and collaborative relationships; and housing policy's role in delivering wider regeneration and social value goals e.g. inclusive communities, economic development, social enterprise, etc. They have asked that the work sector look to provide a full report on the impact and future of innovative policy interventions to increase housing supply and an initial report on the possible role housing policy can fulfil in delivering wider Government regeneration and social value goals.

Ministers agreed that the next Ministerial meeting will take place in Jersey.

BIC Secretariat
4 November 2015
www.britishirishcouncil.org

**BRITISH-IRISH COUNCIL
HOUSING WORK SECTOR**

Scottish Government

Margaret Burgess MSP, Minister for Housing and Welfare

Irish Government

Paudie Coffey TD, Minister of State, Department of the Environment, Communities and Local Government

UK Government

Peter Schofield, Director General Housing and Planning

Welsh Government

Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

Northern Ireland Executive

Mervyn Storey MLA, Minister for Social Development and Jennifer McCann MLA, Junior Minister Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

Government of Guernsey

Mike Hadley, Deputy Minister Housing Department

Government of Jersey

Anne Pryke, Minister for Housing

Isle of Man Government

Hon, Juan P Watterson MHK, Minister Department of Home Affairs