



Introduction	3
History	4
Structure	5
Summit Meetings	
Guernsey.....	7
Isle of Man.....	9
Ministerial Meetings	
Misuse of Substances.....	12
Environment.....	14
Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages.....	16
Work Sector Updates	18-25
Secretariat Funding & Contact Details	26
Extract from the 1998 Multi-Party Agreement	27

On behalf of the British-Irish Council, the Secretariat is pleased to present the annual report for 2014.

During 2014, two Summits and three work sector Ministerial meetings were held, in addition to activity across all twelve BIC work sectors. Interest in the work of the Council from the media, officials and politicians in the different jurisdictions and the general public continued to increase as partly reflected by an increasing number of queries to the Secretariat, more followers on our Twitter account and strong media interest around summits. This is recognition that the British-Irish Council provides a unique space for politicians and officials from all eight Member Administrations to come together to consider matters of mutual interest – indeed it is the only forum where this happens.

The importance to the economies of BIC jurisdictions of effective transport links between our islands was the key theme for the Guernsey Summit in June. This is of particular importance to the three Crown Dependencies, for which these transport links are critical.

Digital Inclusion was the theme of the “e-Summit” held in November by the Isle of Man Government. The image of Heads of Government and Ministers using the provided iPads to read the agenda and papers was particularly striking and perhaps a sign of things to come. The Council also watched two videos which had been prepared by the BIC Digital Inclusion work sector on the importance and value of getting online and how different Member Administrations are assisting those digitally excluded. The videos were praised by Lord David Puttnam in his role as Ireland’s Digital Champion and will be widely used in BIC jurisdictions. More detail on both Summits is included in this report.

Away from the high-profile Summits, activity continued at a pace in the Council’s other work sectors, with three of them holding Ministerial meetings – Misuse of Substances, Environment and Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-used Languages. In all three, Ministers agreed ambitious future work programmes.

In the other BIC work sectors, real progress was made on practical collaboration, sharing best practice and increasingly on reaching out to interested stakeholders. For instance the BIC Marine Energy subgroup held a meeting with Ireland’s Marine Renewables Industry Association (MRIA) at its meeting in June to hear their views on taking forward the deployment of this key technology.

The Secretariat is very grateful to Ministers and officials from all eight Member Administrations for their support and active collaboration in 2014. This will only intensify in 2015 with biannual Summits to be hosted by the Irish and UK Governments, numerous Ministerial meetings, workshops and many other meetings in the pipeline.

Remember to follow us on our Twitter account, [@bicsecretariat](https://twitter.com/bicsecretariat) for real time updates on our work.



Ciarán Byrne
(Irish Government)
Joint Head, Secretariat



Jeremy Martin
(UK Government)
Joint Head, Secretariat

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”. (see page 27 for the text in the Agreement establishing the British-Irish Council).

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.

To date, Members have agreed cooperation in a wide range of diverse issues covering social and environmental topics common to all member administrations.

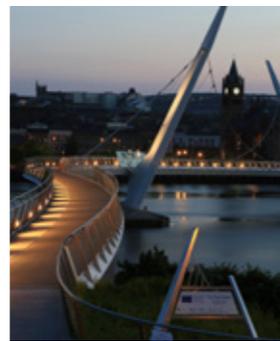
The British – Irish Council held its inaugural meeting in London on 17 December 1999, a fortnight after the establishment of the devolved government in Northern Ireland. The meeting was attended by the then Prime Minister, Taoiseach, and heads of the other Council Member Administrations.



Trinity College, Dublin.



A summer's day at Fermain Bay, Guernsey.



The Peace Bridge, Derry-Londonderry, Northern Ireland.



Countryside at Wharfedale, Yorkshire

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 being represented by the appropriate Minister.

The biannual Council 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. A Senior Co-ordinator from each of the eight Member Administrations provides strategic oversight to the activities underway in the different work sectors and co-ordinates the Council activity within their own

Administration. They also play a key role in preparations for the Council's Summits. The work of the Council is supported by the full-time Secretariat based in Edinburgh and staffed by secondees from Member Administrations. (Contact details are given on page 26).

All Member Administrations participate in the twelve work sectors. Officials from all eight Member Administrations' relevant policy areas meet on a regular basis to progress the work of the sectors.



The dramatic Oxwich beach, Wales.



A relaxed Highland Cow, Scotland.



The gleaming Corbière Lighthouse, Jersey



The harbour at the main port of Douglas on The Isle of Man.

The British–Irish Council in 2014 had 12 work sectors with 3 of those split into subgroups. The work sectors cover a diverse range of social, economic and environmental topics.

Work sectors	Lead Member Administration
Collaborative Spatial Planning	Northern Ireland Executive
Creative Industries	Government of Jersey
Demography	Scottish Government
Digital Inclusion.....	Isle of Man Government
Early Years Policy	Welsh Government
Energy: Electricity Grids.....	UK Government
Marine Energy	Scottish Government
Environment	UK Government
Housing	Northern Ireland Executive
Indigenous, minority and Lesser Used Languages	Welsh Government
Misuse of Substances: Use & misuse of Alcohol/ Misuse of Drugs.....	Irish Government
Social Inclusion	Scottish & Welsh Governments
Transport: Sustainable/ Accessible	Northern Ireland Executive

The Council met twice at Summit level during 2014 in Guernsey and Isle of Man.



British–Irish Council Summit, Guernsey - 13th June 2014

The British-Irish Council held its twenty-second Summit meeting, hosted by the Government of Guernsey’s Chief Minister Deputy Jonathan Le Tocq, on 13th June 2014, in St. Peter Port.

A summary of the discussions and conclusions is set out below

The Council continued to play a unique and important role in furthering, promoting and developing links between its Member Administrations through positive, practical relationships and in providing a forum for consultation and exchange of information on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant Member Administrations.

Main picture above - from left to right

1 Chief Minister Hon Allan Bell MHK Isle of Man Government. 2 Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Ms Fiona Hyslop MSP Scottish Government. 3 First Minister, the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA, Northern Ireland Executive. 4 Deputy Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP, UK Government. 5 Deputy Le Tocq, Chief Minister, Government of Guernsey. 6 An Taoiseach, Mr Enda Kenny TD, Irish Government. 7 The deputy First Minister, Mr Martin McGuinness MLA, Northern Ireland Executive. 8 Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, Ms Edwina Hart MBE CSTJ AM, Welsh Government. 9 Chief Minister, Senator Ian Gorst, Government of Jersey

The Economy

The Council discussed the economic situation in Member Administrations. The Member Administrations discussed the various initiatives that were in place to stimulate the economy. The Council acknowledged the value of the discussions in relation to the economy.

The Economic Importance of Transport Links

The Council held a detailed discussion on the economic importance of transport links. The discussion focused on how the promotion of effective transport links between Member Administrations can be beneficial to their economic development and the strengthening of positive and practical relationships amongst the people of these islands. The Council discussed how the Member Administrations' strategic development initiatives inter-relate in order to promote efficient and effective travel and trade between the jurisdictions.

Update on Work Sectors

The Council received an update of the work that had taken place across each of the twelve work sectors since the last Summit in November 2013. In particular, they welcomed the paper produced by the Collaborative Spatial Planning work sector setting out the various positions of Member Administrations; noted the challenges and opportunities set out in the paper; and requested that officials continue to work collaboratively via the group to identify opportunities to work more closely with other Council work sectors.

The Council also reviewed the latest youth employment statistics and welcomed the recent encouraging trends.

The discussion focussed on how the promotion of effective transport links between Member Administrations can be beneficial to economic development...



The then Scottish First Minister the Rt Hon Alex Salmond welcomed IOM Chief Minister Allan Bell at Glasgow Airport as he touched down on one of the first flights restoring the direct air link between Scotland and the Isle of Man.

BIC Secretariat

The Council noted the Secretariat's progress against its business plan. It welcomed the publication of the Council's Annual Report for 2013. The Council noted that the branding for BIC had been refreshed and was being used at this Summit for the first time



British-Irish Council Summit, Isle of Man – 28th November 2014

The British-Irish Council held its twenty-third Summit meeting, hosted by the Isle of Man's Chief Minister Allan Bell MHK, in Douglas on 28th November 2015.



The Great Laxey waterwheel, Isle of Man.

A summary of the discussions and conclusions is set out below

Digital inclusion – ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from information technology – was the main topic under discussion.



The Economy

The Council discussed the improving economic situation in Member Administrations, recognising the economic interconnections and partnerships that exist between them. The Council reviewed the various initiatives in place to stimulate the economy and acknowledged the continuing value of these regular discussions in relation to the economy.

The Council also reviewed the latest youth employment statistics across the Administrations and welcomed the encouraging picture emerging in this important area.



An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, welcomes Scotland's new First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, to her first British-Irish Council Summit as leader of the Scottish Government.

Main picture above - from left to right
 1 Deputy Jonathan Le Tocq, Chief Minister, Government of Guernsey. 2 First Minister, Ms Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Scottish Government. 3 Minister for Finance and Personnel, Mr Simon Hamilton MLA., Northern Ireland Executive. 4 The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, UK Government. 5 Chief Minister Hon Allan Bell MHK, Isle of Man. 6 An Taoiseach, Mr Enda Kenny TD, Irish Government. 7 The deputy First Minister, Mr Martin McGuinness MLA, Northern Ireland Executive 8 First Minister the Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM, Welsh Government. 9 Chief Minister, Senator Ian Gorst, Government of Jersey

Digital Inclusion

The Council discussed the benefits and increasing importance of digital participation in everyday life and reviewed audio visual material produced by the work sector as a collaborative effort to highlight these benefits. Delegates were updated on examples of work under way in the different BIC Administrations to promote digital inclusion.

The videos can be viewed here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EM3pibtHosE&feature=youtu.be
www.youtube.com/watch?v=rr_SqiStTzk&feature=youtu.be

The Council agreed the importance of ensuring that everyone in their Administrations has the opportunity to share in the benefits of technology and the internet and of its potential contribution towards wider government policies, for example tackling issues like social isolation. The Council agreed that officials in the BIC Digital Inclusion work sector should continue to collaborate on the common themes of 'People, Partnerships and Policies' and investigate potential opportunities for research co-operation.

The Council agreed the importance of ensuring that everyone in their Administrations has the opportunity to share in the benefits of technology...

For more information about getting online follow the link below



Misuse of Substances - Led by Irish Government



9th Ministerial Meeting, Dublin Castle, 27th June 2014

Tackling the Misuse of Substances is a challenge for all British-Irish Member Administrations. Ireland chairs the Misuse of Substances work sector which endeavours to cover a wide range of issues concerned with substance misuse in its annual work programme. Meetings are regularly attended by professionals and academics in the relevant field which greatly adds to the discussion. The ongoing regular contact between Member Administrations on a range of drug related issues continues to contribute to broader co-operation and exchange of information across the Council's area.

One very tangible benefit is the early warning system on new psychoactive substances, where information on new drugs identified in a particular administration is notified to the members of BIC. Information shared about the harmful effects of such drugs has subsequently led to those drugs being controlled.

One very tangible benefit is the early warning system on new psychoactive substances where information on new drugs identified in a particular administration is notified to members of BIC.

Main picture above - Front row from left to right - 1 Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Scottish Government. **2** Minister of State for Primary Care, Alex White T.D., Irish Government. **3** Minister of Health and Social Services, Deputy Anne Pryke, Government of Jersey. **Back row from left to right - 4** Minister for Department of Home Affairs, Hon Juan P Watterson MHK, Government of Isle of Man. **5** Minister of State for Crime Prevention, Norman Baker MP, UK Government. **6** Minister of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Edwin Poots MLA, Northern Ireland Executive. **7** Junior Minister Jennifer McCann MLA, Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister, NIE. **8** Minister for Home Department Deputy, Peter Gillson, Government of Guernsey. **9** Minister for Health and Social Services, Dr Mark Drakeford AM, Welsh Government

The Irish Government hosted the 9th Ministerial meeting of the British-Irish Council on the Misuse of Substances in Dublin Castle on 27 June 2014. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Alex White T.D., the then Minister of State for Primary Care in Ireland with responsibility for the National Drugs Strategy. The key thematic discussion at the meeting focused on current patterns and responses in relation to Cannabis, New Psychoactive Substances and Misuse of Prescribed Medicines. The Ministers agreed on the importance of collaboration between Member Administrations in tackling drug-related issues and in preventing the trafficking of drugs, illicit medicines and new psychoactive substances.

In the course of the meeting, the Ministers shared information in relation to trends in drugs seizures, innovative approaches aimed at detecting cannabis farms, evidence of drug use in Member Administrations and ways of addressing the misuse and/or diversion of prescribed controlled medication and the inappropriate use of over the counter medicines.

Discussions also focused on the role of social media in disseminating timely drug awareness and harm reduction messages to young people.

The Ministers also had an opportunity to exchange information on alcohol policies within their jurisdictions and the various approaches that were being taken to address these issues, including legislative measures.

Other Work Sector Activity

There were two meetings of the Misuse of Substances Sectoral Group at official level in 2014. The first of these meetings was hosted by the Irish Government and held in Dublin Castle in February 2014. Discussions focused

on the potential of online services to provide early intervention and access to treatment and support. The Group heard presentations from the Irish Health Services Executive on interactive drug and alcohol support and the North/South "Hidden Harm" project on the impact of parental substance misuse on children.

A further meeting of the Group at official level was held in Edinburgh on 8th & 9th September 2014. The main theme of the meeting concerned opiate-related harm and included a presentation from the Scottish Drugs Forum on drug related deaths, the ageing cohort of drug users and the Scottish National Naloxone programme. The UK Government delivered a presentation to the group on the outcome of a new psychoactive substances review. In relation to the misuse of alcohol, the group received a presentation on questions referred to the European Court of Justice concerning the introduction of legislation to provide for minimum unit pricing in Scotland. An outline of the work programme for 2015 was also considered by the Group.



Environment - Led by UK Government



13th Ministerial Meeting, Douglas, 15th October 2014

The British-Irish Council Environment work sector held its thirteenth Ministerial meeting, hosted by the Government of the Isle of Man, in Douglas. The meeting, chaired by Dan Rogerson MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management, UK Government, focused on sustainable consumption and production, in particular the development of the circular economy and tackling barriers to green consumption.

Circular Economy

Ministers discussed the development of the circular economy taking place in each Member Administration and by the European Union.

Jamie Butterworth from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation provided a presentation to the Ministers including their research which indicated transitioning to a more 'circular' economic model could bring significant benefits, help to buffer future materials price increases and volatility, reduce material costs and restore natural capital. Such an approach could also make economies less dependent on raw materials, and thus less dependent on price volatility and supply chain risks.

Ministers noted the definition of the circular economy used by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

Main picture above - from left to right - 1 Assistant Secretary, David Walsh, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Irish Government 2 Minister for the Environment, Deputy Yvonne Burford, Government of Guernsey. 3 Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management, Dan Rogerson MP, UK Government. 4 Minister for Environment, Food & Agriculture, Hon Richard Ronan MHK, Isle of Man Government 5 Minister for the Environment, Mark H Durkan MLA, Northern Ireland Executive. 6 Director for Environment / Deputy Chief Officer, Willie Peggie, Department of the Environment, Government of Jersey. 7 Head of Waste Strategy, Dr Andy Rees, Welsh Government. 8 Policy Manager Circular Economy, Callum Blackburn, Scottish Government. 9 (Not in Photograph) Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA, Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister, Northern Ireland Executive

"The circular economy is a generic term for an economy that is regenerative by design. Materials flows are of two types, biological materials, designed to re-enter the biosphere, and technical materials, designed to circulate with minimal loss of quality, in turn entraining the shift towards an economy ultimately powered by renewable energy."

Ministers agreed to work together to explore the potential of extending coverage of voluntary agreements both across different industries and across different Member Administrations. Ministers agreed it would be useful for Member Administrations to share best practice and to work together on the potential to develop tools and data sets to measure progress in moving towards a circular economy.

Tackling Barriers to Green Consumption

Ministers shared best practice and challenges on promoting green consumption faced in their jurisdiction. They also considered international evidence such as the Rio Earth Summit +20 conference held in June 2012 when Heads of State and Government adopted a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns and work by the European Union to improve the availability of reliable and comparable information on the environmental performance of products.

They acknowledged the challenges faced by consumers over the quality of information given, availability of green products and "greenwashing" claims, and noted behavioural barriers to increasing uptake of "green" products, as well as information failures. They considered the need for better information for consumers as well as encouraging business to recognise the opportunities from reducing the lifestyle

impacts of their products and assisting consumer choice. Ministers appreciated that retailers were in a powerful position to influence more sustainable consumption throughout their operations and supply chains and noted the work done to date by retailers and other stakeholders.

Ministers agreed to further share information and data on consumer behaviour and explore the possibility of adopting green guidance schemes as already in place in some Member Administrations.

Invasive Non-Native Species

Following on from the 12th BIC Environment Ministerial held in Scotland in 2012, Ministers reaffirmed the threats posed to Member Administrations' ecosystems from Invasive Non-Native Species. They noted that new EU regulations on Alien and Invasive Non-Native Species were due to come into force on 1st January 2015 and agreed to continue collaboration and co-operation between all Member Administrations, including holding a second workshop in 2015.



The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture at St John's, Isle of Man is an excellent example of how a well-designed building can be energy efficient and a healthier work place.

Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages - Led by the Welsh Government



3rd Ministerial Meeting, Cardiff, 24th October 2014

The First Minister of Wales, Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM hosted and chaired the British-Irish Council's 3rd Indigenous Minority and Lesser-Used Languages (IML) Ministerial in Cardiff on 24th October 2014.

BIC Ministers considered the place of Indigenous Minority and Lesser-Used Languages in Early Years Education - the subject of a BIC organised seminar in Cardiff in November 2012. **Ministers endorsed the paper as capturing the key issues in developing and supporting early years education & childcare within IML language communities.** Ministers also agreed the important role of encouraging linguistic continuity through the use of IML languages within childcare and early years education.

Ministers received a presentation by Professor Rob Dunbar, Edinburgh University based on the official report of the BIC's Seminar on Language Policy and Legislation held in Edinburgh in November 2013. Ministers noted this report and discussed the important role that legislative, regulatory and/or policy approaches can play in support of IML languages; whether suitable initiatives may be appropriate to their jurisdiction; and how continued sharing of best practice of language legislation and/or regulation could further support IML languages across BIC Administrations.

Main picture above - from left to right - 1 Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, Alasdair Allan MSP, Scottish Government. **2** Head of International Social & Economic Engagement, Clive Barbour, Northern Ireland Office, UK Government. **3** Junior Minister, Jennifer McCann MLA, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, Northern Ireland Executive. **4** Minister of Culture and Leisure, Deputy Michael O'Hara, Government of Guernsey. **5** First Minister of Wales, Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM, Welsh Government. **6** Minister for Education and Children, Hon. Tim Crookall MHK, Isle of Man Government. **7** Minister for Social Development, Mervyn Storey MLA, Northern Ireland Executive. **8** Jèrriais Language Officer, Tony Scott Warren, Offici du Jèrriais, Government of Jersey. **9** Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs, Joe McHugh TD, Irish Government



First Minister, the Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM interacting with young people at the Urdd Eisteddfod

Ministers also noted the continuing sharing of good practice between Member Administrations on language issues. They commended the bilateral and other relationships built up and facilitated through BIC membership. These contacts are having beneficial results for smaller BIC Administrations in particular. As a result of BIC, the Guernsey Language Commission will have the Manx Language Officer as an honorary member. The Isle of Man Government is considering whether a Language Commission as has been set up by Guernsey may add value to work of the Manx language community.

Finally, Ministers considered and approved proposals for the future work programme of the BIC IML languages work sector. This will focus on issues around language learning for adults, marketing, the arts and digital media, the links between language and the wider economy and the role of the community in sustaining IML languages.

Other work sector activity

The work sector met at official level throughout 2014, sharing developments and good practice between BIC jurisdictions, including Welsh language app development.



Dan Rogerson MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management and Ministerial Chair of the environment work sector, visited Bunscoill Ghaelgagh, the only Manx medium school in the world. Also pictured, Julie Matthews Ard Ynseyder (Headteacher) and Hon Phillip Gawne MHK, Minister for Department of Infrastructure.

Collaborative Spatial Planning - Led by Northern Ireland Executive

Collaborative Spatial Planning explores how Member Administrations can work together across borders to plan for and implement key infrastructure. This work sector brings together officials from each of the Member Administrations who are responsible for national, island and regional development strategies.

The group meets biannually to exchange information and share perspectives and best practice on current planning challenges. They met in Belfast in September 2014 to review how to take forward the mandate for continued collaboration agreed by Ministers at the Council's June Summit in Guernsey.

The meeting agreed that the outworking of this mandate would take a number of forms and will inform the group's work programme

over the next 18 to 24 months. In the first instance, the group will develop a Spatial Perspectives paper by devising a high level strategic map which identifies, on a factual basis, a number of shared spatial features in respect of infrastructure, the economy and the environment. Once developed, it is envisaged that this will enable Member Administrations to identify shared challenges and opportunities and how these might be taken into account in the preparation or revision of individual spatial plans where appropriate.

The group will develop a Spatial Perspective paper by devising a high level strategic map which identifies, on a factual basis, a number of shared spatial features in respect of infrastructure, the economy and the environment.

Digital Inclusion - Led by Isle of Man Government

Developments in digital technology have generated a period of massive social and cultural change, affecting all aspects of society. However, there is an overwhelming correlation between digital and social exclusion – three quarters of socially excluded people are also digitally excluded.

The work sector looks at the different ways Member Administrations are tackling digital inclusion, and the group share best practice and statistical information. The role of digital inclusion in supporting the public service efficiency agenda is a key topic for the group.

The work sector has identified clear areas of overlap and common interest with the Social Inclusion work sector; these areas will be explored further in 2015.

Digital Inclusion was the key theme for this Isle of Man Government hosted Summit and a paper and videos were produced for Ministers. The work sector will be considering potential deliverables arising from the Summit (See main article page 11).

Creative Industries - Led by Government of Jersey

The British-Irish Council Creative Industries work sector was established at the twentieth Summit meeting held in Derry~Londonderry on 21st June 2013.

Work sector officials have met four times in 2014 in Cardiff in January; Derry~Londonderry in March; London in July; and Dublin in November.

The work sector attended the Creative Classrooms conference in Derry~Londonderry. The conference covered the development of whole school plans to use ICT to deliver the wider curriculum, development of coding, demonstrations of 3D printing and the use of the third sector such as Nerve Centres to support teachers and learners. The work sector also had private meetings with US academics on developing the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) agenda in schools; with representatives from the Nerve Centre and others.

The work sector was invited to observe a meeting of the UK Creative Industries Council in London and attend the launch of the Creative Industries Strategy at Facebook's UK headquarters.

The UK Creative Council is a private sector led group of creative industry stakeholders which regularly meets with UK Government ministers. This helped inform discussion at the meeting the following day. The work sector also received a presentation from the UK's Creative Skillset.

The work sector also met in Dublin, visiting Windmill Lane Studios - one of the leading post production and VFX companies in these islands. The work sector heard first hand about their work both within Ireland, for UK clients and further afield including Canada and Russia. The meeting was held at the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin Castle, which houses a world-leading collection of Asian and Middle Eastern art and priceless Islamic artefacts and manuscripts and is a key tourist attraction especially for visitors from the Middle East.

The work sector is currently drafting a series of reports for Ministers for their consideration at the Ministerial meeting in autumn 2015 in Jersey.

Gross Value Added (GVA) for 2012-13 increased by 9.9 per cent - more than three times that of the UK economy as a whole, and higher than any other industry.



A dalek celebrated the launch of the Creative Industries Strategy at Facebook's UK offices 1st July 2014



Video post-production work on Golden Globe award winning Russian film "Leviathan" at Windmill Lane Pictures, Dublin. One of the study visits undertaken by officials in the Creative Industries work sector.

Demography - Led by Scottish Government

Demographic changes are being faced by all Member Administrations. Since 2006, Ministers have supported consideration of shared challenges, and agreed in principle a work plan of understanding migration and its impact; healthy independent ageing, investigating policy interventions, fertility, and student flows. The work sector's most recent area of focus was on understanding the implications of wider student flows amongst the Member Administrations and the full report was published on the BIC website in March 2013.

A meeting of the group was held on 12th December 2014 in Edinburgh where work sector members refreshed their consideration of priorities and identified new themes to focus on. The work sector is also considering how its work may inform the other work sectors in considering their demographic contexts.

www.britishirishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Higher%20Education%20Student%20Migration%20Flows%20Paper.pdf



Early Years Policy - Led by Welsh Government



Early Years Collaborative, Glasgow SECC 28th October

The work sector provides a platform for sharing best practice on early years childcare, education and health, all of which are critical to improving children's life chances, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and to support families in these challenging economic times.

The Early Years work sector met twice in 2014, in the Isle of Man in April and Glasgow in October. The April meeting held a workshop on workforce development and visited early years settings and the Isle of Man's pre-school assessment centre. The work sector met in Glasgow on 28th October 2014. The meeting was arranged around the Early Years Collaborative - a conference organised three times a year by the Scottish Government working in partnership with

local authorities, NHS Scotland and third sector organisations. **It brings together hundreds of early years professionals from all disciplines and agencies across Scotland to improve performance;** share best practice and provide change management toolkits and frameworks. The work sector was very impressed with the event which was held at the Scottish Conference and Exhibition Centre, in light of the scale of the event.

The work sector is considering options for a Ministerial meeting which will be discussed further in 2015. The work sector also exchanged information and best practice from each Member Administration.

Energy - Marine Energy led by Scottish Government / Electricity Grids led by UK Government



The work sector is split into two subgroups: Marine Energy (led by the Scottish Government) and Electricity Grids (led by the UK Government). Both groups are committed to sharing best practice and exploring areas for collaboration between Member Administrations to make the most of the substantial energy opportunities that widely exist in the Council's jurisdictions.

Energy: Marine Renewable Energy

The Marine Energy subgroup recognise that, in order to progress the marine renewables industry towards commercialisation, greater collaboration is required to overcome common issues that are impeding the industry. The subgroup met twice in 2014 including a meeting at University College Cork with industry stakeholders to consider their recommendations for the group. During that visit, the subgroup visited the Irish Maritime & Energy Cluster (IMERC) based at the National Maritime College of Ireland to see and learn first-hand how their innovative approach to partnership is helping to take forward marine renewable energy in Ireland.

The subgroup also met in October 2014 in Llandudno during which the subgroup heard updates on the MeyGen Project, Anglesey Energy Island, Ocean Energy Europe and the ISLES 2 project. Recognising the continuing challenges faced by the sector, the subgroup has agreed to undertake further work to raise its profile within Europe, linked to the continuing work of the Ocean Energy Forum.

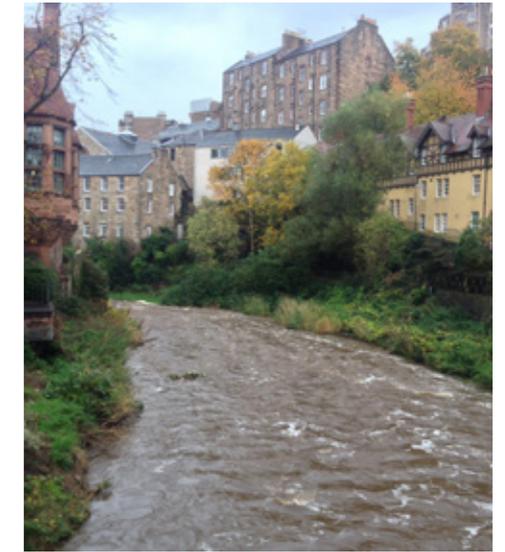
Energy: Electricity Grid Infrastructure

The BIC Electricity Grids subgroup met twice in 2014 - in February and then October back-to-back with the Marine Energy subgroup in Llandudno. The meetings focussed on Electricity Market Reform (EMR) in Great Britain, energy trading between BIC jurisdictions and the newly announced Ofgem proposals for the electricity network as part of its Integrated Transmission Planning & Regulation (ITPR) project.

The Scottish Government presented and led discussions at BIC on the on-going work of the Irish-Scottish Links on Energy Study (ISLES), and highlighted upcoming opportunities for engagement and consultation with BIC Member Administrations as the project progressed.

Marine Officials arriving in Cork to hear about the significant role of the Irish Maritime and Energy Cluster (IMERC) based at the National Maritime College of Ireland.

Housing - Led by Northern Ireland Executive



The Housing work sector seeks to focus on sharing information, knowledge and best practice between Member Administrations in a number of areas including supply, funding and allocation of social housing and funding and delivery of affordable housing.

Officials of the Housing work sector met in Edinburgh in September 2014 and had a detailed exchange of information on housing market conditions and policy/legislative approaches in the various jurisdictions. The group is focusing on innovation in housing

finance as a priority area of work and will prepare a paper drawing on experiences across the Council's Member Administrations for Ministerial consideration. The next meeting is scheduled for Douglas, Isle of Man in April.

Examples of housing from these isles- the terraced housing of Abertridwr in the South Wales valleys and Dean Village in Edinburgh

The Housing work sector seeks to focus on sharing information, knowledge and best practice between Member Administrations in a number of areas including supply, funding and allocation of social housing and funding and delivery of affordable housing.

Social Inclusion - Led by the Scottish and Welsh Governments

Social Inclusion is about reducing barriers which may exist for people when accessing services or participating in the community.

The Ministerial meeting held in Cardiff in March 2012 recognised the very effective working relationship between Member Administrations on the social inclusion theme. Ministers asked for work to begin on a report on the issue of preventative spend, in particular in the context of an ageing population. Officials from the Council's Member Administrations have now visited all eight Member Administrations, studying best practice in older peoples' policy and have undertaken a series of site visits, meetings with stakeholders and expert presentations.

The lessons learned will help inform the final report on preventative spend issues which will be discussed by Ministers at the sixth Social Inclusion Ministerial meeting in Edinburgh on 11 March 2015 (see link). www.britishirishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Social%20Inclusion%20Bruchure%20FULL%20.pdf

Officials engaged in this work sector also value greatly the productive and collaborative working relationships between Member Administrations that has built up around and outside the sector.

Social Inclusion is about reducing barriers which may exist for people when accessing services or participating in the community



Joseph Rowntree Foundation research group, Bradford

Transport - Led by the Northern Ireland Executive



The work sector was given the opportunity to test drive electric vehicles as part of a study visit as part of the work sector's sustainable transport agenda.

The Transport work sector has two sub-groups which deal with accessible transport and sustainable transport issues. The Groups met in Glasgow, Guernsey and London during 2014.

The Transport work sector currently focuses on (i) the role of Smartcard Technology and journey planners to assist citizens to move more freely and easily between administrations and (ii) on how to promote more sustainable modes of transport including strategies for ultra-low emission vehicles.

The groups reviewed recent legislative and policy developments around the Council area. They continue to review opportunities to improve integrated journey planning facilities enabling passengers to plan travel by public transport across two or more

Member Administrations; to examine opportunities to co-ordinate use of smart card technology for travel and to identify barriers that need to be overcome; and to consider whether further measures are needed to enhance electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout the area.

Officials also agreed to continue to share best practice and a range of reports and website information on issues of interest to the work sector, both at meetings and via the Council's extranet. Officials have also continued to discuss the possibility of coordination of promotional events.

Funding - The running costs for January to December 2014 totalling £98,000 were shared between the eight Member Administrations using an agreed set formula. Costs for individual Secretariat staff are met by their parent administration as they are on loan to the Secretariat with the exception of the general office manager and funding for Summits are met by the host Member Administration.

For further information please see 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



Old Man of Storr, Isle of Skye.

1. A British-Irish Council (BIC) will be established under a new British-Irish Multi-Party Agreement to promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands.
2. Membership of the BIC will comprise representatives of the British and Irish Governments, devolved institutions in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, when established, and, if appropriate, elsewhere in the United Kingdom, together with representatives of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.
3. The BIC will meet in different formats: at summit level, twice per year; in specific sectoral formats on a regular basis, with each side represented by the appropriate Minister; in an appropriate format to consider cross-work sector matters.
4. Representatives of members will operate in accordance with whatever procedures for democratic authority and accountability are in force in their respective elected institutions.
5. The BIC will exchange information, discuss, consult and use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant Administrations. Suitable issues for early discussion in the BIC could include transport links, agricultural issues, environmental issues, cultural issues, health issues, education issues and approaches to EU issues. Suitable arrangements to be made for practical co-operation on agreed policies.
6. It will be open to the British-Irish Council to agree common policies or common actions. Individual members may opt not to participate in such common policies and common action.
7. The British-Irish Council normally will operate by consensus. In relation to decisions on common policies or common actions, including their means of implementation, it will operate by agreement of all members participating in such policies or actions.
8. The members of the British-Irish Council, on a basis to be agreed between them, will provide such financial support as it may require.
9. A Secretariat for the British-Irish Council will be provided by the British and Irish Governments in co-ordination with officials of each of the other members.
10. In addition to the structures provided for under the Multi-Party Agreement, it will be open to two or more members to develop bilateral or multilateral arrangements between them. Such arrangements could include, subject to the agreement of the members concerned, mechanisms to enable consultation, co-operation and joint decision-making on matters of mutual interest; and mechanisms to implement any joint decisions they may reach. These arrangements will not require the prior approval of the British-Irish Council as a whole and will operate independently of it.
11. The elected institutions of the members will be encouraged to develop inter-parliamentary links, perhaps building on the British-Irish Inter-parliamentary Body.
12. The full membership of the British-Irish Council will keep under review the workings after the Multi-Party Agreement comes into effect, and will contribute as appropriate to any review of the overall political agreement arising from the multiparty negotiations.