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NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL INLAND WATERWAYS SECTORAL FORMAT

ENNISKILLEN

16 JANUARY 2009

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The eighth North South Ministerial Council meeting in Inland Waterways sectoral format was held in Waterways Ireland's Headquarters, Enniskillen on 16 January 2009.
2. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Gregory Campbell, MP MLA, Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure and Michelle Gildernew, MP MLA, Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development. The Irish Government was represented by Éamon Ó Cuív TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Minister Campbell chaired the meeting.

Progress Report

3. The Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland, Mr John Martin, reported to the Council on progress in 2008. Significant achievements during this period included:
 - completion of work on the new Waterways Ireland Headquarters in Enniskillen during September and subsequent relocation of staff in the new accommodation ;
 - the restoration of the Royal Canal to the Shannon at Mosstown Bridge was completed in July 2008 and Lyneen Bridge works commenced in August 2008;
 - additional moorings of 242 metres on the Erne System and 36 metres on the Lower Bann and 36 metres on the Royal Canal were provided;

- the successful removal of the old swivel bridge and installation of a new bridge over the Shannon navigation at Portumna, County Galway; and
- an award for Maintenance Excellence in the maintenance and asset management category at the Irish Maintenance Society Company Awards for Waterways Ireland's Bridge Survey System.

Restoration of the Clones-Upper Lough Erne Section of the Ulster Canal

4. The Council reviewed progress to date on the project and noted that Waterways Ireland has:-
 - met with a wide range of statutory agencies and with the majority of the landholders who will be affected by the project;
 - decided to undertake the preliminary design stage internally; and
 - that following the acquisition of land and receipt of planning, Waterways Ireland will let the contract for the design and construction of the project to a single entity.

Lower Bann and Erne Waterways

5. The Council welcomed Waterways Ireland's successful enhancement of the facilities and services on the Lower Bann and Erne waterways to further develop access to their waterways and waterside activities.

Property Disposals

6. The Council agreed proposals for a number of property disposals in the context of a range of development projects on the waterways.

Waterways Ireland Business Plan 2009

7. The Council noted the draft 2009 Business Plan for Waterways Ireland, which is under consideration by both sponsor Departments and Finance Departments in line with budgetary processes in the two jurisdictions. Both sponsor Departments will work together to finalise the Business Plan and bring it forward for approval at a future NSMC meeting.

Waterways Ireland Annual Report and Accounts

8. The Council noted Waterways Ireland's Annual Report and Accounts 2007.

**Joint Secretariat
16 January 2009**