

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC TRAN 2 (11) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TRANSPORT MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

21 OCTOBER 2011

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The eleventh North South Ministerial Council Transport meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on 21 October 2011. The meeting was attended by Minister Varadkar, TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Minister Kennedy, MLA, Minister for Regional Development and Minister Attwood MLA, Minister of the Environment. Minister Varadkar chaired the meeting.

MAJOR ROADS PROJECTS

2. The Council discussed progress on the A5 and A8 road projects. Ministers noted that public inquiries into the A5 project (North West Gateway to Aughnacloy) and the A8 (Belfast to Larne) projects ended on 1 July 2011 and 23 June respectively. The Council also noted that the Cross Border Steering Group has produced an agreed report and that subject to final approval at the NSMC Plenary a further request for drawdown of £3 million will be made.

FREIGHT

3. The Council discussed progress made on the five priority areas of the All-Ireland Freight Forum which included:
 - meetings with the relevant regional and local authorities including Dublin City Council and Belfast City Council about more sustainable freight transport operations in Dublin and Belfast;
 - an event involving 50 delegates from public bodies and industry, from which key issues relating to a safer more compliant and eco-efficient road freight industry were identified;
 - a meeting of representatives of ports, railway companies, shipping lines and exporters to explore further the potential of rail freight and coastal trade and short sea shipping;
 - establishment of a comprehensive baseline in relation to international connectivity on all regular scheduled ro/ro and lo/lo services and identification of key industry clusters;
 - a review of existing freight data for Northern Ireland and Ireland and a related user consultation and stakeholder workshop which was held in Dublin Castle on 5 October to identify potential information gaps.
4. Ministers noted that the Freight Forum will hold a second plenary event on 7 November 2011 in Belfast to address a range of issues that are relevant to the freight sector.

ROAD SAFETY

5. The Council noted that the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020 was published on 15 March 2011.
6. Ministers discussed the continuing cooperation and engagement on road safety ideas and initiatives including the delivery of Road Safety Strategies and developments in harmonising Blood Alcohol Concentration levels.
7. Ministers also noted ongoing work in both jurisdictions to assess the impact of the UK Government's proposed Heavy Goods Vehicle Charging Scheme.
8. The continuation of joint intelligence led targeted operations in border areas for 2011 focussing on vehicles standards, licensing and drivers hours was also noted.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PENALTY POINTS

9. Ministers noted that officials will work together to bring forward proposals for the introduction of mutual recognition of penalty points between Northern Ireland and Ireland for 4 lesser road traffic infringements.
10. A timetable for delivery and implementation will be prepared with the aim of having the necessary legislation and supporting administrative arrangements in place by 2014. A progress report will be made at the next NSMC Transport meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11. The Council agreed to host its next NSMC Transport meeting in March/April 2012.

**Joint Secretariat
21 October 2011**