

Corporate report: Accord between Forestry Commission (England) and National Parks England

The Accord, a statement of a shared ambition between the Forestry Commission and National Parks England, will bring together decision makers to ensure woodland is managed sustainably and in line with a natural capital approach. This will take into account the environmental, social and economic impact of trees and forests and the statutory purposes of our National Parks.

Press release: UK Aid raises the voices of grassroots HIV organisations

The UK has today (Wednesday 25 July) committed to increase its support to help people in grassroots organisations keep HIV on the agenda in countries around the world.

International Development Minister Alistair Burt made the announcement at the International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam, also attended by HRH Duke of Sussex and Sir Elton John.

He pledged that DFID will step up its support for the Robert Carr Fund – an organisation dedicated to supporting community networks across the world which help people with HIV to realise their human rights, tackle stigma, and advocate for policy change.

International Development Minister Alistair Burt said:

People affected by HIV should be able to live without fear of stigma and discrimination. That's why it's important that through UK aid we continue to support vulnerable people to access the HIV prevention and treatment services that they have a right to.

The UK is already the second largest funder of HIV prevention, treatment and care in the world. UK aid is preventing people from being infected, providing lifesaving support for those living with HIV, improving access to medicines and leading innovative research.

The work of the Robert Carr Fund and civil society networks mean that people with HIV get access to the health services that they need and live without

fear of stigma and discrimination.

The investment from DFID will support the following groups who are most vulnerable to HIV infection – men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, prisoners, sex workers and transgender people, among others – in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

Projects and campaigns supported by the Fund include:

- The 'Gay Star News Digital Pride' project empowers LGBT voices across the Middle East and North Africa to celebrate Pride online in a safe environment.
- AMSHeR supported workshops to campaign for human rights when people with HIV were arrested in Tanzania. This group also developed an African Key Populations Scorecard; this is an index to hold governments to account for their performance, against global guidance, for people living with HIV.

Notes to Editors

- The UK government is the second largest donor to the global AIDS response and to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.
- This £6million announcement brings the DFID's support to the Robert Carr fund to £15million up to 2021. In 2016 globally 19.5 million of the 36.7 million people living with HIV had access to treatment – up from 5.2 million people on treatment in 2010.
- Around 76% of pregnant women living with HIV have access to antiretroviral medicines up from 47% in 2010.
- New HIV infections among children have halved.

There is more to do:

- In 2016 AIDS killed over 1 million people.
- AIDS remains the biggest killer of women of reproductive age (15-49) worldwide.
- Although more people are on treatment, we are not having the same success in bringing new infection rates down.

- Globally, in 2016 nearly 2m adults per year were infected with HIV, with no statistically significant drop in new infections in adults since 2008.

UK spend on HIV:

- DFID is the second largest international funder of the HIV response behind the US, spending £1.56 billion.
- Our investments are through multilateral organisations such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, UNAIDS and Unitaids given their greater reach and scale. These are key players in the global response on HIV. The UK sits on the boards of all three organisations.

[News story: Chancellor announces £12 million for Bombardier and invites Derry-Londonderry city deal bid](#)

Nearly £12 million of new funding for Bombardier, has been announced by the Chancellor during a visit to Northern Ireland today (25 July 2018) to help the company secure long-term manufacturing jobs in Belfast. The project will be part-funded by local partners Invest Northern Ireland. The funding will support the company to develop the thrust reverser for the new Airbus A320 NEO nacelle – essential components for modern airplanes.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

We are backing Bombardier with £12 million of new money to help develop cutting edge technology – here in Northern Ireland – for modern aircraft. This will help to secure jobs for Northern Ireland's economy and cement the UK's role as a leading manufacturer of high tech aircraft components.

Northern Ireland is leading the way within the UK in productivity growth. I want to support this progress by inviting a bid for a Derry-Londonderry City Deal, an opportunity for the region to continue to drive forward economic growth and build an economy that works for everyone.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Karen Bradley said:

I am delighted with today's announcement, which is a positive step in progressing a City Deal for Derry-Londonderry. It is a testament to the many local partners who have worked tirelessly for progress to be made.

As Northern Ireland's second largest centre for economic growth, Derry-Londonderry plays a significant role in the region's economic success.

I look forward to now engaging with local partners and across Government as proposals are developed and we build on the existing strengths of this area to deliver a real impact on the economy in the North West and across Northern Ireland.

Vice-Chancellor of Ulster University, Professor Paddy Nixon said:

I welcome the Chancellor's announcement today that the UK government is inviting local partners to submit proposals for a Derry-Londonderry City Deal. I look forward to working with the local council and others to bring forward ambitious proposals for the government to consider.

Today the Chancellor has also invited a city deal bid for the Derry-Londonderry City Region. This will give local councils, universities and businesses the chance to submit plans to government on their priorities for driving forward economic growth and boosting productivity for the benefit of the Derry-Londonderry city region and the whole of Northern Ireland.

On his visit the Chancellor will tour Bombardier's production line for aircraft wings and welcome the new orders for 60 A220 announced last week at the Farnborough Airshow. Aerospace is a key manufacturing sector for the UK, and Northern Ireland, and it will be a vital part of the Industrial Strategy Sector Deal. While in Belfast, the Chancellor will also meet with the government's FinTech envoy in Northern Ireland, Georgina O'Leary, and major industry leaders in financial services. He will also discuss how the Brexit White Paper will benefit Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has seen a 14.2% increase in productivity since 2010 – the fastest of all regions and nations of the UK. The potential for further growth is being supported by investment in Ulster University, which has benefitted from £50 million of UK government funding since 2015 for cutting edge research and development. The UK government is also delivering the biggest increase in research and development investment for 40 years.

Further information

- The government is investing over £1.6 billion in city deals in Scotland

and Wales and is in negotiations for a Belfast City Region Deal – the first city deal in Northern Ireland.

News story: Faith Minister calls for new bell ringers as the nation readies for the First World War Centenary

The government funded '[Ringing Remembers](#)' project aims to recruit 1,400 new bell ringers to take part in Armistice Day 2018 commemorations as the First World War Centenary programme reaches a seminal moment. The campaign is being run by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in collaboration with Big Ideas and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

One thousand new bell ringers have already been recruited to ring out following the traditional march past the Cenotaph and to honour the 1,400 bell ringers who lost their lives in the First World War.

Meeting new recruits to the project in the north-east, Lord Bourne officially launched the new Ringing Remembers badge, which will provide bell ringers with a lasting reminder of their contribution to Armistice Day 2018.

Faith Minister Lord Bourne said:

The bell ringing community tragically saw 1,400 members lose their lives to the war effort. Their sacrifice will be honoured by our Ringing Remembers project, which will recruit the same number of bell ringers to take part in the centenary Armistice Day celebrations.

One hundred years ago bell ringers across the country caught and amplified the national mood as 4 years of war came to an end.

In remembrance of that special moment, and of the sacrifice bell ringers made during the First World War, I urge people across the nation to sign up to 'Ringing Remembers' and take part in Armistice Day 2018 as we honour those that gave so much to defend our freedom and liberty one hundred years ago.

Lord Bourne's call to action comes after the UK government, supported by the German government, invited nations across the world to participate in international bell ringing on 11 November 2018. This will mirror the moment 100 years ago when relief and emotion overtook and bells rang out across the country to celebrate Armistice.

Press release: Joint Communiqué of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 25 July 2018

A meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (BIIGC) took place at the Cabinet Office in London on 25 July 2018.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was represented by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon David Lidington MP, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP. The Government of Ireland was represented by Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Simon Coveney TD, and the Minister for Justice and Equality, Mr Charles Flanagan TD.

The Conference was established under Strand Three of the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement “to promote bilateral co-operation at all levels on all matters of mutual interest within the competence of both Governments”.

The Conference discussed the following:

Legacy

The Conference reviewed the overall progress towards implementation of the Stormont House Agreement legacy framework.

Both the Irish and UK Governments re-asserted their commitment to the legacy bodies set out in the 2014 Stormont House Agreement as the best means of addressing the legacy of Northern Ireland’s past. The UK Government updated the Conference on the consultation currently being held on the Stormont House institutions which runs to 10 September. The Irish Government updated the Conference on the legislative measures being brought forward within its jurisdiction to implement and support the Stormont House Agreement legacy framework and raised other legacy issues.

Security co-operation

The Conference reviewed the current security situation, and discussed the continuing threat posed by Northern Ireland Related Terrorism in the United Kingdom and in Ireland.

The Conference expressed its rejection of all paramilitary violence and all other forms of paramilitary activity. The Conference reiterated its strong support for the efforts of the Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána, along with other agencies, in keeping people safe and secure across both jurisdictions.

Both the UK and Irish Governments recalled commitments in the 2015 Fresh Start Agreement to ending paramilitarism and looked forward to the first report of the Independent Reporting Commission established under that Agreement.

East-West matters

The Conference considered the strength of the bilateral relationship between the United Kingdom and Ireland and welcomed the high levels of bilateral cooperation across a range of important policy areas.

The Conference agreed that this level of bilateral co-operation needed to be maintained and, where possible, strengthened following the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

Officials were asked to take forward work in this area with a view to coming forward with proposals for future East-West cooperation, including at Cabinet and Ministerial level, for consideration by the Irish and UK Governments at a future meeting of the Conference.

Political stability

Both the UK and Irish Governments reiterated their strong support for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and subsequent agreements which have underpinned the progress made in Northern Ireland over the past two decades and which provide the framework for the political process in Northern Ireland.

The Irish and UK Governments re-affirmed their shared commitment to all of the political institutions established by the Agreement and to securing the effective operation of power-sharing, devolved government in Northern Ireland and the consequent resumption of the North/South Ministerial Council and Northern Ireland participation in the British Irish Council at the earliest opportunity.

Both the UK and Irish Governments agreed to continue working closely together in accordance with the three-stranded approach as set out in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

Future meetings

It was agreed that the Conference would meet again in the autumn.