

Northern Ireland Secretary to Outline Centenary Plans

Secretary of State Brandon Lewis is to formally launch the UK Government's plans to mark Northern Ireland's centenary next year.

At a Policy Exchange event in Belfast later, Mr Lewis will announce a £3million funding commitment for the anniversary, unveil centenary branding – 'Our Story in the Making: NI Beyond 100' – as well as outlining further details regarding the centenary programme.

Speaking ahead of today's launch, Mr Lewis said: "2021 marks 100 years since the creation of Northern Ireland, which paved the way for the formation of the United Kingdom as we know it today. We will use this opportunity to hear untold stories, to promote Northern Ireland on the world stage and to celebrate its people, culture, traditions and enterprise; and its vital contribution to the United Kingdom.

This past year has not been easy but I believe we are seeing light at the end of the tunnel. As we look forward to 2021, the Government is planning an exciting programme to promote Northern Ireland's potential across the UK, and also internationally. Next year is the time to shine a light on what makes Northern Ireland so special, and to look forward to a bright future.

Last month, the Government launched the Shared History Fund, making available £1million to support the engagement of a wide range of arts, heritage, voluntary, community and other non-profit organisations with the history of the centenary of Northern Ireland

The Centenary Forum is meeting regularly, ensuring we listen to diverse perspectives as we create a bold and ambitious centenary programme. The Forum provides an opportunity for a broad spectrum of people, including those from across the political parties, business, tourism and the voluntary and community sectors, to come together to shape the delivery of the programme of events to mark this significant national anniversary. The Historical Advisory Panel is also working to provide advice to the Forum, and to the Government, on the historical facts of the period, as well as seeking to encourage and support a deeper public awareness of the history of the centenary.

Notes to editors