

JMC Annual Report 2012-2013

Introduction

The Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) comprises the UK Government, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive and is at the centre of formal relations between these administrations. The JMC meets in Plenary, Domestic and European formats. Procedures for the operation of the Joint Ministerial Committee are set out in the Memorandum of Understanding.

This document outlines the activities of the JMC since the last meeting of JMC in plenary format in September 2012 and will be published on the websites of the four administrations.

JMC Plenary

The Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) met in plenary format on 19 September 2012. A discussion took place on the current economic climate, including the global economic environment, and the state of the public finances. Ministers also discussed the UK's future aviation policy, focussing on the strategic goals set out in HM Government's draft Aviation Policy Framework. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of working closely together on matters of mutual interest. Amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding were agreed. Ministers noted the successful resolution of the Olympics funding dispute, and the current position with regard to the disagreement on Northern Ireland's capital allocation.

Domestic policy discussions

The JMC met in Domestic format on 6 March 2013.

It discussed the implementation of the UK Government Welfare Reform programme and plans to tackle child poverty.

Discussion of European issues

The JMC met in European format on five occasions during the year to discuss current European Union (EU) business in which the Devolved Administrations have an interest; and to facilitate their input to the UK Government's negotiating stance prior to European Councils.

On **15 October 2012** it discussed:

- Multi-annual Financial Framework
- Proposals for Council arrangements
- UK/DA Coordination and Horizon Scan covering the Balance of Competences exercise and a forward look of agendas
- Preparations for the October and November European Councils.

On **3 December 2012** it discussed:

- Balance of Competences Review
- Readout of November European Council
- UK-DA Coordination and Horizon Scan covering Council arrangements
- Preparations for the December European Council.

On **4 March 2013** it discussed:

- Readout of February European Council
- Upstream Engagement
- UK-DA Coordination and Horizon Scan covering Council arrangements
- Preparations for the March European Council.

On **17 June 2013** it discussed:

- Broadband Infrastructure (in relation to State Aid guidelines)
- SME policy and the European dimension
- UK-DA Coordination and Horizon Scan
- Preparations for the June European Council.

On **7 October 2013** it discussed:

- Balance of Competences Review
- Youth Unemployment
- UK-DA Coordination and Horizon Scan
- Preparations for the October European Council

Resolution of Issues

During the course of the year a resolution was reached on a disagreement on the £18 billion capital expenditure commitment to Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Executive/UK Government). The administrations reached agreement on an economic package including an investment plan confirming delivery on the commitment to £18 billion of capital funding over the period 2005-2017 in June 2013.

Discussions on the Economy and Public Finances

The key forum for consideration of financial and economic matters is the Finance Ministers' Quadrilateral which met twice during the period.

On **8th November 2012** it discussed:

- The economy
- The 2013 Autumn Statement
- Council Tax Benefit

- Pension Reform
- UK Guarantees
- EU Budget Issues.

On **3rd June 2013** it discussed:

- The economy
- The 2015-16 Spending Round
- Welfare Reform
- Shared Services.