

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

11/11/2016 - 18/11/2016



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Monday 14 November 2016

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on the development of greenways, including cross-border greenways

Mr Hazzard: Last week, I published 'Exercise Explore Enjoy: A Strategic Plan for Greenways', which sets out my vision for:

"a region where people have ready access to a safe traffic-free environment for health, active travel and leisure."

The plan provides a framework to assist councils to develop their own local schemes as part of a greenway network for the North. It proposes a primary greenway network and a secondary greenway network that link together the entire region. It also includes cross-border links from Derry to County Donegal, Enniskillen to Sligo, Armagh to Clones and Newry to Dundalk. That is the first step towards creating a world-class greenway network that will be a welcome investment in rural development and active travel, providing for leisure and recreation, creating long-term employment and Monday 14 November 2016 26 entrepreneurship opportunities and enhancing opportunities for tourism.

The strategic plan is not just about words and intentions. Alongside the plan, I announced 20 small grants to councils under the small grants programme for greenways, whereby I am providing a grant of up to £8,000 towards the cost of a greenway feasibility study. Providing support to councils in the development of greenways helps to increase safety for people using bikes, which is a key objective in the bicycle strategy. The use of active travel is also an aspiration in the Programme for Government, and better designed greenways are important in laying the foundations for longer, healthier, more active lives.

Mr Murphy: I thank the Minister for his response. He will know there has been widespread welcome for the initiative that he launched last week, particularly in my area, where the greenway alongside Carlingford Lough, which he will be familiar with, will connect with an bealach glas, which goes from Carlingford to Omeath, creating potential linkage right the way from Portadown to Carlingford. So, it

is a very welcome scheme indeed. What total resource has the Minister set aside to deliver the project?

Mr Hazzard: The first element of funding is the 20 schemes that I have supported through a small grant of £8,000 towards the cost of a feasibility study along each route. So that is £160,000. Following receipt of the feasibility studies, up to four of the highest-quality proposals will be offered a grant of up to £25,000 to develop the detailed design further. Although that is only a small amount of funding, it will help councils to start the work of developing their local schemes within the framework for the strategic plan for greenways. The strategic plan sets out a vision for the next 10 years, and there is a need to develop scheme plans over the next two or three years.

Funding for greenways is also available through the INTERREG programme, and I expect that a number of the cross-border projects may well be successful in securing financial support. For future years, I have some capital funding in my departmental plans, and I will seek to secure capital funding on top of that. There is no doubt that money is tight, but we must ask ourselves this question: can we afford not to invest in greenways? Although roads projects very often hog the limelight, greenways and other active travel initiatives are truly transformative projects for communities, as well as personally for individuals.

Source: <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-14-11-2016.pdf>



15 November 2016

Jonathan O'Brien asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she has considered the implications for cross-Border co-operation in justice and policing matters in the context of Brexit.

Frances Fitzgerald: As the Deputy will be aware the Government continues to prepare to face the challenges and opportunities that are presented by the UK's decision to leave the European Union, including in the field of justice and police co-operation.

I have met with the Northern Ireland Justice Minister, Claire Sugden, and with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, James Brokenshire, in recent weeks and months and we have had the opportunity to discuss the potential implications for the UK's exit from the EU for North-South co-operation in justice and policing. We are agreed that it is our shared aim to seek to ensure that the current high levels of co-operation on this island can be continued.

There is close and ongoing co-operation between An Garda Síochána and the PSNI in respect of all aspects of policing. This co-operation is based firmly on a shared commitment to improving community safety throughout the island of Ireland, to disrupt criminal and terrorist activity and to enhance the policing capability of both police services on the island.

There is also strong ongoing co-operation across the range of criminal justice areas involving the Justice Departments and justice agencies North and South that includes initiatives in respect of forensic science, youth justice, probation and the management of offenders and issues relating to the requirements of social diversity in the justice system.

There is also a range of important areas of civil justice to do with contracts, debt recovery and family law, for example, which are based in EU law and would have particular relevance to the circumstances in which people live and do business on the island of Ireland.

Officials in my Department have been working to identify the principal sectoral impacts and opportunities in the short to medium term and to identify priority actions in terms of policy measures relating to North-South justice and policing co-operation. There has been and will continue to be close interaction with officials in the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland in this regard.

There can be no question about the extent to which EU measures in respect of policing and in the criminal and civil justice fields can support actions to combat crime and to improve community safety and support justice. It is essential, therefore, to work to ensure that the greatest possible levels of co-operation can continue to be maintained.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2016-11-15a.134&s=cross-border#g135.q>