

Prime Minister to call for shared focus at British-Irish Council summit

The Prime Minister will today (Thursday 10 November) attend the opening of the British-Irish Council summit, the first Prime Minister to do so since 2007.

He will join representatives from the Irish Government, UK Government, Devolved Governments and Crown Dependencies at the 38th summit in the North West of England.

Ahead of the summit, the Prime Minister will have a bilateral with the Taoiseach Micheál Martin, and is also expected to meet with First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon and First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford. This follows initial phone calls with the leaders immediately after taking office.

In the margins, the Prime Minister will also host his first Prime Minister and Heads of Devolved Governments Council to update on work ahead of the Autumn statement and stress the need for a collective effort to provide long-term economic stability. The Chancellor Jeremy Hunt will join discussions virtually.

Opening the summit, the Prime Minister will call on all representatives to focus on tackling shared issues through closer collaboration.

He is expected to say:

We face huge challenges from global economic headwinds to war in Europe.

So let's be pragmatic. Let's work together in our shared interests.

Let's deliver for all our people across these great islands – and build a future defined not by division, but by unity and hope.

The Prime Minister's attendance at the summit follows the announcement by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland earlier this week that the Government will be introducing legislation to provide a short extension to the period for Executive formation. This comes after extensive engagement with Parties, businesses, community representatives and members of the public in Northern Ireland.

Noting the disappointing absence of representation from Northern Ireland at the summit due to the collapse of the Executive, the Prime Minister will highlight the important role of the British-Irish Council in finding resolutions.

The Prime Minister will reiterate his commitment to restoring the Northern

Ireland Executive, and is expected to say:

The British-Irish Council is a vital East-West body under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, an agreement that I am deeply committed to.

We all want to see power sharing restored as soon as possible.

I'm determined to deliver that.

The British-Irish Council comprises of representatives from the UK Government; Irish Government; Scottish Government; Northern Ireland Executive; Welsh Government; Isle of Man Government; Government of Jersey and Government of Guernsey.

Established under the Belfast (Good Friday) agreement, the Council's aims are to promote positive, relationships among the people of the islands.

The Prime Minister will open the summit, hosted by the UK government in the North West, and attend a dinner with representatives.

Levelling up Secretary and Minister for Intergovernmental relations Michael Gove will represent the UK government at the summit's plenary session on Friday 11th November.

Minister for Intergovernmental Relations Michael Gove said:

The Prime Minister's attendance at the British-Irish Council is a signal of our intent to work positively with our Irish counterparts and colleagues from the Devolved Governments and Crown Dependencies across the UK.

As the Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, I look forward to chairing the Council this week and working cooperatively in the months ahead as we face up to many shared challenges.