

Centenary bodies meet to discuss plans for Northern Ireland's anniversary

- The Centenary Forum announced by the Prime Minister on his visit to NI in August meets to discuss plans to mark the 100 year anniversary
- Secretary of State and Minister of State welcome views from all communities on marking this important milestone for the United Kingdom
- Lord Bew and Historical Advisory Panel provide independent advice and insight to inform preparations for the centenary

The NI Centenary Forum met today to progress plans to mark 100 years since the creation of Northern Ireland in a spirit of mutual respect, inclusiveness and reconciliation.

The Forum, whose membership was publicly confirmed today and which is chaired by NIO Director of Communications, Andy Pike, is composed of statutory, political, business, community and civic voices, from a wide range of perspectives and interests.

The inclusion of these diverse perspectives is vital to facilitate respectful discussion around this key moment in our shared history. Whether through the Forum, or through wider engagement, every effort will be made by the UK Government to ensure these perspectives are included and respected.

At today's meeting, the advisory group discussed a range of proposals to facilitate national recognition and international awareness of the anniversary, that will reflect on the past and importantly, build for Northern Ireland's future. The centenary can be an opportunity to showcase what is best about Northern Ireland around the world; this programme of centenary events will reinforce the UK Government's commitment to a prosperous Northern Ireland and levelling up through economic development and investment opportunities. It will also celebrate Northern Ireland's people, business, culture, arts, and young talent, looking forward to a positive future.

The Centenary Historical Advisory Panel has also started work, bringing together a range of expertise and perspectives. It is independently chaired by Lord Bew, Emeritus Professor at Queen's University, Belfast.

This Panel will provide advice to the Forum, and to the Government, on the historical facts of the centenary, and its work will be guided by the Principles for Remembering. As part of its role, the Panel will seek to develop and curate accessible content which encourages a deeper public awareness of the history of the centenary.

Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, Robin Walker MP said:

"The Centenary Forum provides a fantastic 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 an ambitious programme of events to mark this significant national anniversary.

“I want to see the whole of our society represented on the Centenary Forum, so that together we can progress this unique and exciting opportunity to mark the centenary of Northern Ireland.

“I thank the Historical Advisory Panel, chaired by Professor Lord Bew, for their contribution in bringing strong and independent academic rigour to our approach to marking this important anniversary.”

Professor Lord Bew said:

“It is important that the centenary is marked in such a way that recognises the historical facts of the period. This Panel, which will be academically rigorous and independent in its research, includes a range of perspectives and research interests; I am also eager to collaborate more widely with historians and researchers across these islands. I look forward to working with them to develop key themes and collectively enrich public understanding of the events of 1920-22, and their implications.”

Composition of the Centenary Forum:

- Doug Beattie MC MLA
- Eileen Chan-Hu, CRAIC NI
- Stephen Farry MP
- Rev. Mervyn Gibson, Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland
- Ivy Goddard, Inter-Ethnic Forum
- Peter Harbinson, Invest NI
- Howard Hastings
- Jacqueline Irwin, Community Relations Council
- David Jackson, SOLACE NI
- Ian Marshall
- John McGrillen, Tourism NI
- Paul Mullan, National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Luke Patterson, NI Youth Parliament
- Canon David Porter
- Gavin Robinson MP
- Cormac Savage, NI Youth Parliament
- Jonathan Stewart, British Council
- Liza Wilkinson, TIDES Training
- Richard Williams, Northern Ireland Screen

Composition of the Centenary Historical Advisory Panel

- Professor Lord Bew MRJA, Emeritus Professor, Queen’s University Belfast
- Dr Brian Barton, FRHistS, Independent Historian
- Dr Marie Coleman, FRHistS, SFHEA, Reader in Modern Irish History, Queen’s University Belfast
- Dr Niamh Gallagher, Lecturer in Modern British and Irish History,

University of Cambridge and Fellow of St. Catharine's College

- Dr Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid, Senior Lecturer in Modern History, University of Sheffield
 - Dr Margaret O'Callaghan, Reader in History and Politics, Queen's University Belfast
 - Professor Henry Patterson, Emeritus Professor of Politics, University of Ulster
 - Professor Graham Walker, Professor of Political History, Queen's University Belfast
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[Government invites Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset to submit locally-led proposals for unitary local government](#)

The government has today (9 October 2020) [invited councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset](#) to submit locally-led proposals for unitary local government, responding to requests from these areas.

Councils in these 3 areas now have the opportunity to develop and submit their proposals for how they want to restructure local government in their area to establish unitary local government. This would mean moving from a two-tier system of county and district councils, to a system where there is a single tier for any given area.

For example, earlier this year legislation was signed to abolish 8 councils in Northamptonshire and replace them with 2 new unitary councils, North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire.

In April this year, the county council and 4 district councils in Buckinghamshire were abolished and the new Buckinghamshire Council took on full local government functions and powers.

Invitations are being issued to councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset as these 3 areas are advanced in their discussions about local government restructuring and councils in these areas have asked for an invitation to be issued. Formally inviting them to submit proposals is the first step in the legal process towards restructuring.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset are already working on developing their locally-led unitary proposals and I am

now giving them the opportunity to submit them for consideration.

Where there is local support, changing the structure of local government can offer better value for money and improved services for residents. We have always been clear that any restructuring of local government must continue to be locally-led and will not involve top-down solutions from government.

Councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset will now have the opportunity to decide whether to develop and submit their locally-led proposals with the aim of any new unitary councils being established in these areas by April 2023.

The government may receive more than one locally led proposal for each area reflecting the local debates. In the event of this, the Local Government Secretary will consider all proposals received and decide which, if any, subject to consultation and Parliamentary approval, to implement.

He will assess any locally-led proposal he receives against the longstanding criteria for unitarisation. These are that a proposal should improve the area's local government, command a good deal of local support across the area and cover an area that provides a credible geography.

The size of any unitary council will be considered, but should always take into account local identity and local geography, as well as economies of scale.

The government has also re-affirmed the broad principles on local government re-organisation, as set out in a written ministerial statement in July 2019.

Restructuring local government through moving to a unitary structure can improve decision-making and deliver value for money for local residents, however councils can also opt for different administrative reforms including merging district councils, joint committees, adopting joint plans, sharing back-office services, special purpose vehicles to promote regeneration like local Development Corporations, or delivering cost-savings through efficiency measures.

The government will not impose top-down restructuring of local government and will continue to follow a locally-led approach for unitarisation where councils can develop proposals which have strong local support.

This has been the government's consistent approach since 2010 and the introduction of the Local Government Act 2010. Those in an area will know best – the very essence of localism to which the government remains committed.

Councils in North Yorkshire invited to submit proposals include:

- Craven District Council
- Hambleton District Council
- Harrogate Borough Council

- North Yorkshire County Council
- Richmondshire District Council
- Ryedale District Council
- Scarborough Borough Council (Whitby Scarborough Filey)
- Selby District Council
- York City Council

Councils in Somerset invited to submit proposals include:

- Somerset County Council
- Bath and North East Somerset Council
- North Somerset Council
- district councils in the area: Mendip; Sedgemoor; Somerset West and Taunton; South Somerset

Councils in Cumbria invited to submit proposals include:

- Cumbria County Council
- district councils in the area: Allerdale; Barrow-in-Furness; Carlisle; Copeland; Eden; South Lakeland

Formally inviting councils to submit unitary proposals is the first step in the legal process towards restructuring under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Invitations to submit proposals for unitary local government in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset

These invitations ask councils in these 3 areas to develop and submit locally-led proposals for how they want to restructure local government in their area to establish unitary local government. This would mean moving from a two-tier system of county and district councils, to a system where there is a single tier for any given area.

The Secretary of State for MHCLG will carefully consider any proposals he receives, assessing them on the basis of the longstanding criteria for establishing unitary councils, namely that if a unitary proposal is to be implemented it must be likely to improve local government in the area, command a good deal of local support overall across the area, and lead to unitary councils covering a credible geography.

Guidance for GPs to access extra flu vaccines as part of expanded vaccination programme

- Vaccines are already being given to at-risk groups in GPs and pharmacies and will continue over the winter months
- Additional vaccines have been secured by government to allow providers to vaccinate the expanded eligible groups

This guidance explains the process that GPs should follow to access the government's additional vaccines from the central supply.

As part of the tried-and-tested approach to delivering vaccination at scale, should GPs deliver all vaccines from their own stock, they can place orders from mid-October with suppliers for the government-secured stock to be delivered from November. These vaccines will be provided to those at-risk groups like 65s and over, pregnant women and those with pre-existing conditions, as well as frontline health and social care workers.

GPs and pharmacies are responsible for procuring flu vaccine. However in addition to this, the government has agreed to procure over 8 million vaccines which providers can access once their own stock is empty to help deliver the vaccine to 30 million people.

Over 10 million vaccines have already been delivered, with the other 20 million scheduled for delivery in October, November and December. As flu levels generally do not begin to rise until December, people do not have to rush to get vaccinated in September or October, as the vaccination programme continues right up until and into the flu season.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Jonathan Van-Tam said:

If you are in an eligible group, or if you are a frontline health or social care worker, the flu vaccination will help to protect you and your loved ones this winter. That is very important at a time when COVID-19 is an additional threat. If you're eligible for a free flu vaccine, you will be contacted by the NHS to arrange an appointment. When that happens, please take advantage of this important protection.

Dr Raj Patel, NHS Deputy National Medical Director of Primary Care, said:

Frontline NHS staff are working harder than ever to prepare for winter and have seen significant increase in demand for the flu vaccination, so access to additional supply will be very well received by GPs and patients alike. GPs and pharmacies will

continue to offer regular, timely flu vaccines to eligible groups, making particular efforts to prioritise the most vulnerable.

Those eligible for the free flu vaccine, alongside frontline health and social care workers, have already begun to receive their vaccinations. Those aged 50 to 64 will also be eligible for a free vaccine but will be invited later in the season. Once they're invited, they will be eligible to receive vaccines from the government-secured supply.

The flu vaccination programme will run throughout the winter months and into January, so anyone eligible for a vaccine will be able to receive one. The flu season tends to start in December, but vaccination at any point in the season is valuable protection.

GP guidance has been issued directly to providers.

A pre-set proportion of this additional stock will also be made available to trusts and community pharmacy, and the arrangements for them to order against this stock will be confirmed shortly.

[Updates to the Covid Corporate Financing Facility](#)

News story

The Covid Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF) has provided £30 billion of direct support to some of the economy's largest firms, who are responsible for almost 2.5 million jobs in the UK.



The CCFF provides temporary direct support to investment grade firms with short-term cash-flow problems, and is designed to ensure that firms accessing government backed CCFF financing are able to repay.

To ensure the CCFF continues to meet its objectives, the Treasury has

introduced a new access review process. Under which, the Treasury will continue to assess the credit quality of firms in the CCFF and, from today, will also ask firms to provide an up to date credit rating when requesting financing from the scheme. Where the firm's credit rating has dropped below investment grade, the Treasury will ask for additional information before deciding the appropriate level of support.

Full details have been published by the [Bank of England](#).

Our varied package of financial support continues to be available for businesses with different requirements, which includes more than £10 billion in grants, supporting £58 billion of longer-term commercial loans, paying the wages of millions of furloughed employees, deferring tax bills and scrapping business rates.

UKGI, as the government's centre of excellence in corporate finance and corporate governance, is increasing its resources to help with additional COVID-related responsibilities, including work arising from the CCFF and this review process.

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