



British Irish
Chamber of Commerce



Policy Review 2018

Sectoral Committee Review

The Agri-Food Committee

The Agri-food Committee provided the content for the KPMG - Ulster Bank #Agenda 2018 Policy Seminar: 'The UK-Ireland Agri-Food Sector: A Shared History, A Shared Future'. This event was a significant success for the Chamber attracting a sizeable audience and widespread media coverage. Keynote speakers included Michael Creed TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Tara McCarthy, CEO, Bord Bia Patrick Coveney, CEO, Greencore, Pamela Byrne, Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and Carol Ann O'Keeffe, Customs Division, Revenue. The Committee also made a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine regarding the impact of the UK referendum on membership of the European Union on the Irish Agri-Food & Fisheries Sectors. Maree Gallagher, Chair of the Committee appeared in front of the Oireachtas Committee presenting on the Chamber's Paper which is available to read [here](#). The Committee met twice in 2018.

The Culture, Arts, Sports and Tourism (CAST) Committee

The Culture, Arts, Sports and Tourism (CAST) Committee met four times in 2018. The Committee met with Dublin City Council to discuss 'Fanzones' for the Euros in 2020 and the possibility as using the fanzones template for other major sporting occasions. The Committee also met with Brendan Griffin, Minister for Tourism and Sport as well as the GAA and FAI. The Committee is also set to meet Josepha Madigan, Minister for Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht in the new year. The highlight of the year was the KPMG - Ulster Bank #Agenda 2018 Seminar: 'Crossing Borders: Connections and Collaborations'. Held in KPMG's Offices on the banks of the Lagan, the event brought together a diverse audience of politicians from across the political spectrum, business leaders, sporting organisations (including the Irish Football Association and the GAA), members and guests of the Chamber, representatives from Ireland's world-renowned cultural and artistic offering (including the MAC and Lyric theatres amongst many others). Speakers included: Lord Duncan of Springbank, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Niall Gibbons, CEO, Tourism Ireland, Niamh Flanagan, Executive Director of Theatre NI, Richard Williams, Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Screen and Katie Mullan, Captain, Irish Women's Hockey Team.

The Energy and Environmental Committee

The Energy and Environmental Committee had a busy year. In February, the Committee worked with Energy UK to hold a Seminar 'What is the Future of the UK – Ireland Energy Relationship?', sponsored by SSE and held in London. The Seminar was attended by over 100 stakeholders from the UK-Ireland Energy sector and included representatives from the Regulators, the Civil Service, Energy practitioners and members of the Chamber and Energy UK. The purpose of this Seminar was to bring together

stakeholders to analyse and evaluate the energy relationship that currently exists between the UK and Ireland and to assess the potential impact that Brexit may have on this relationship. A report on the Seminar can be found [here](#). Subsequently, the Committee invited Lawrence Slade, CEO of Energy UK to address the Committee over lunch followed by a meeting with Minister Naughton. The Committee also organised an evening discussion in the offices of the Chamber entitled 'The Future of Irish Interconnection'. Paul Lynam was invited to speak in Brussels at an Energy UK organised roundtable with permanent representatives of the EU countries on the topic of 'What does the UK's departure from the European Union mean for the Energy Union?'. The Committee is also a signatory to Eurolectric's letter to the EU Commission/UK Government 'Minimising the Brexit disruption on energy and climate' and has joined Energy UK, Electricity Association of Ireland, Renewable UK and Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group (NIRIG) on a written briefing on 'Briefing: Brexit – Avoiding No Deal for the UK Energy Sector' sent to all MPs.

The Financial and Professional Services Committee

The Financial and Professional Services Committee has had quite a proactive year. In March, the Committee alongside the Brexit Committee hosted a Roundtable Discussion with Jeremy Browne, Special representative for the City of London to the EU. In April, as part of the KPMG - Ulster Bank #Agenda 2018 Series the Committee organised a Policy Seminar entitled 'International Financial Services in Ireland & UK post-Brexit' in the City of London, Guildhall, London. Keynote Speakers included: Michael D'Arcy, Minister for Financial Services, Catherine McGuinness, Chairman, Policy & Resources, City of London & Gerry Cross, Director of Policy, Central Bank of Ireland. Alongside the Brexit Committee we hosted Dashiell Caldwell, Deputy Director for EU Strategy on Financial Services and Roland Phillips, Senior Policy advisor in the Financial Services Group from HM Treasury for an in-depth roundtable discussion on Brexit and the Financial Services sector. In July, the Committee worked with the City of London in organising a Roundtable Discussion with Minister D'Arcy with British and Irish financial services providers. In October, the Committee received a detailed presentation on 'Brexit opportunity for Irish Legal Services' from Paul Mc Garry SC from the Bar Council of Ireland. The Committee also made a short submission to Ireland's new Strategy for IFS sector IFS 2025 – available [here](#). In January, the Committee will host another Seminar on 'Asset Management after Brexit: Responding to the New Reality'.

The Higher Education and Research Committee

In May, the Committee under the leadership of the Chamber's Patron Niall FitzGerald, convened a daylong Conference on 'Developing the UK-Ireland Higher Education and Research Partnership' in the Tower of London. Key Speakers included Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor, University of Oxford, Sam

Gyimah MP, Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation; John Halligan TD, Minister for Innovation,; Professor Sir Mark Walport, Chief Executive, UKRI; Professor Paul Joseph Boyle, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester; Professor Mark Ferguson, Director General of SFI, Graham Love, CEO, HEA and Professor Patrick O'Shea, President of UCC, Chair of the IUA. This was the only event of its kind which brought together the Presidents of Ireland's Universities (7/9), Vice-Chancellors and VPs for Research from the UK and Industry leaders to discuss this topic. The Chamber has since met with the Taoiseach to discuss the under-funding of higher education in Ireland. The Committee has also met with Damian Hinds MP, Secretary of State for Education to discuss UK-Ireland collaboration. More recently, the Committee added its support to the IUA's SaveOurSpark campaign.

Next year, the Committee will host a dialogue of higher education and research leaders from Ireland (North & South), Scotland and Wales. The Committee is also looking at a major UK-Ireland Conference in Dublin Castle next May.

The ICT Committee

The KPMG - Ulster Bank #Agenda 2018 Seminar 'Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity' was a highlight of the Committee's year focusing on 5 diverse themes of Winning the War for Talent, Driving Entrepreneurism, Incentivising Investment, Supporting the Sector to Grow and Developing the UK-Ireland Tech Corridor. This Seminar built on the Policy Paper the Committee developed last year and drew out key elements for detailed discussion. The ICT Committee in partnership with the Brexit Committee held a roundtable briefing with Data Officials from the UK Government on 'Data Post-Brexit'.

The Infrastructure Committee

The Committee hosted Carwyn Jones MWA, First Minister of Wales in Trinity to discuss the importance of protecting Irish-Welsh trade post-Brexit. The Infrastructure Committee launched the #Agenda 2018 Series in February with its Seminar 'Developing Infrastructure Fit for Purpose' with key speakers such Eoghan Murphy TD, Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Anne Graham, CEO National Transport Authority and Cormac Murphy, European Investment Bank, Dublin. In June, the Committee met with Dara Callery TD, Deputy Leader of Fianna Fáil to discuss his Private Members Bill on establishing a National Infrastructure Commission - a key suggestion in the Committee's Infrastructure Paper and subsequently the Chamber's Budget Submission. The Committee Chair also held meetings in the UK to discuss their Infrastructure oversight programmes. It is under the remit of this Committee that the 'Ports and Transit Forum' was established bringing together UK and Irish Port and Freight companies to scope out the challenges for their respective sectors as a consequence of Brexit. This Forum will meet again in January.

The Life Sciences Committee

The Committee held a very successful Policy Seminar ‘Brexit: A Prescription for Change?’ in Cork as part of the #Agenda series. This Seminar successfully brought together industry leaders and researchers to address two distinct but equally important elements of the Brexit debate ‘The Regulatory and Market Access Impact of Brexit on the Life Sciences Sector’ and ‘The Importance of UK – Ireland Research Collaboration in the Life Sciences Sector’. This Seminar received one of the best feedbacks from the attendees of any of the #Agenda series.

The SME Committee

The SME Committee meets more often than any other at least once every six weeks. As well as being heavily involved in policy matters, the Committee has also taken a pro-active approach to events – its sends representatives to all the Chamber’s policy events from Dublin and Cork to London and Belfast. It organised its own networking breakfast in the Chamber’s offices with Alec Drew presenting, once a sponsor is found it will lead on a breakfast series next year. It also organised a Policy Seminar in Galway on the importance of ‘Preparing Irish Business for Brexit’ and ‘Maintaining Trade with the UK’.

Brexit Review

It has been another busy year for the British Irish Chamber on Brexit. Over the past twelve months the Chamber has continued its advocacy in Dublin, London and Brussels while maintaining its position as the leading voice on Brexit across the UK and Ireland space.

The year began with continued advocacy of the Chamber's signature policy paper [How to Make Brexit Work for All: Big Principles for a Strong Brexit Partnership](#). However, as the Brexit process evolved over the course of 2018, the focus of these meetings changed. Most recently the Chamber has been advocating for the passing of the [Withdrawal Agreement](#) in Parliament in the UK.

In the last year alone, the Chamber has met with over 60 Ministers, MP's, TD's, MEP's, Lords and Senators. This is in addition to numerous meetings with officials from relevant offices and departments including the British Embassy in Dublin and the Irish Embassy in London; the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Taoiseach, and Business Enterprise and Innovation in Dublin; the Departments for Exiting the EU, Businesses, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Treasury and the Home Office in London; as well as the European Commission and the European Council in Brussels.

Furthermore, the Chamber has appeared in front of the House of Lords EU Committee and the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade to discuss Brexit and present the views of our members on the issue.

The Chamber has updated members on the latest developments on Brexit through our newly established [Brexit Views](#) column. The column has provided insight and guidance on some of the key Brexit Papers published throughout the year including the [UK Government's Chequers White Paper](#), the [European Research Groups \(ERG\) Technological Solutions paper](#), as well as the [Withdrawal Agreement](#) and [Political Declaration](#) that were agreed between the UK and EU.

The Chamber has also kept its members informed of [supports available for businesses](#) from Irish, UK and EU agencies as they prepare for Brexit. We have also published a summary of [the EU Commission's Guidance](#) and the [UK Government's Technical Notices](#) that provide guidance on preparations that will be necessary in the event of "no deal".

The Brexit Subcommittee continued its work guiding the Chamber's Brexit work under the Chairmanship of Pat Cabbage from VW Ireland. The Subcommittee met quarterly in 2018 to discuss objectives for the Chamber to achieve on Brexit and to contribute to the policy direction of the Chamber on this vitally important topic. This year also saw the establishment of a Services-Sub Group

to consult directly on the needs of the services sector arising from Brexit with further work planned for this group in 2019.

The Subcommittee also hosted visits in Dublin from MPs such as Shadow Business Minister Bill Esterson MP and Shadow Brexit Secretary Keir Starmer MP. Members of the Committee also met with Trade Policy Minister Greg Hands when he was in Dublin last May.

The Subcommittee further fed into the COBCOE Brexit Ambition Project building on the work of the Chamber as part of this project in 2017. Earlier this year the committee fed into a follow-up piece on what businesses want from a Transition Period including how long they need the period to be in order to prepare.

The Subcommittee also partnered with DCU's Brexit Institute for an event on Customs, Trade and Brexit last June. The event, held in DCU's Helix brought together businesses, academics and other key stakeholders to discuss the possible implications for customs and trade as a result of Brexit. The partnership with DCU is just one of the many strategic partnerships the Chamber has this year, with many of these partnerships structured through the Chamber's sectoral committees.

Some of the key Brexit policy positions taken by the Chamber this year include:

- In July, the Chamber welcomed the publication of the [UK Government's Chequers White Paper](#)
- In September, the Chamber responded to the proposed [technological solutions for the border](#) on the island of Ireland put forward by the European Research Group (ERG)
- In October, the Chamber [urged SME's to put in place preparations](#) for a post-Brexit relationship between the UK and Ireland
- The Chamber welcomed the Irish [Budget 2019](#) as the most progressive Brexit budget to date
- The Chamber has [warned against the dangers](#) of a "no deal" Brexit
- This month the Chamber has been [urging MPs to vote in favour of the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement](#)